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PERSONALITY IN POLITICS

*Studies of
Contemporary Statesmen*

by

ARTHUR SALTER

"The choice and master spirits of this age"

—JULIUS CAESAR, *Act III, Sc. 1*

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PREFACE

This book is designed to illustrate the influence of personality in politics from memories and impressions of dominant public figures of the first half of this century. The earliest and the last chapters discuss the general theme, while between them there is a kind of portrait gallery with an annotating catalogue. The selection of these figures is due to the accident of my personal contacts, mainly as an official, sometimes in national, sometimes in international, service, but later as a Member of Parliament and a Minister.

The official has a special post of observation. He sees public men closely, and with a certain intimacy, but in relation to his own specialized task. He knows one side of their character in minute detail, but his perspective is narrower than that of those who are themselves on the public stage; and he applies a somewhat different criterion of value to qualities and defects. His general outlook on public affairs is usually, though in varying degrees, characterized by a certain myopic particularity of vision. Every specialized experience involves a bias which needs to be assessed and discounted, and the official's among them; but something will still remain as a contribution to truth.

The political leaders here portrayed are, with few exceptions, from the great democracies of the West. I would that I could have added others, especially from the other great country, Russia, on which the fate of the world now so largely depends. But I have confined myself to writing of those whom I have known personally, in the intimate if limited association of public work. To my regret it has never been my fate to visit Russia, and though I have known many

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Russians, including the two great Ambassadors, Mr. Litvinoff and Mr. Maisky, I have never worked with them in the revealing collaboration of a common task. Above all I have not known personally any of the present members of the Politburo, on whose complex psychology the future so much depends. Nothing could be of more value at the present time than an intimate knowledge of the interacting motives of apprehension, ambition and suspicion, which animate the guarded and secluded Kremlin Committee who now wield so terrifying a power. There is no adequate discernible reason in any conflict of material interests why Russia should not live in amity with the rest of the world; and to a quite exceptional extent international relations now depend, not upon the mass movement of impersonal forces to which Marxian determinist theory assigns so exclusive an importance, but upon the interacting characters and psychology of a few men.

For similar reasons I have included no studies of the German leaders who were responsible for the recent war. If we are to understand the past, or be forewarned for the future, the personal qualities which enable a would-be dictator to exploit the weaknesses of a free government need to be understood, and it is much to be hoped that those who possess, as I do not, the necessary knowledge and experience, will record their impressions before their memories fade.

Those sketched here include five British Prime Ministers, Balfour, Lloyd George, MacDonald, Neville Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill; two other British statesmen, Bryce and Haldane; two men who greatly influenced political thought without themselves entering a government, H. G. Wells and Maynard Keynes; two American Presidents, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt; the Fascist dictator of Italy, Mussolini; and (drawn on a smaller scale) three Prime Ministers of France, Clemenceau, Poincaré and Briand; the Generalissimo and Prime Minister of China, Chiang Kai-shek and T. V. Soong, with half a dozen other public figures from America, France and China. In one case (that of Neville

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Chamberlain) I have drawn substantially on a chapter in my book *Security*, and in a few others have made use of some passages in appreciations written elsewhere at different times. Otherwise what now appears is published for the first time.

In each case my purpose has been, not to write a miniature biography, but to give a general impression of character, with special emphasis on one or two significant qualities, illustrated by incidents which I happen myself to have witnessed. It is hoped that these sketches, taken as a whole, will throw some light on the theme discussed in the opening and the concluding chapters, the relation between personality and history. They illustrate the weaknesses and the strength of a free and popular system in a modern state, and the personal qualities that, in such a system, attract and retain power. And as each of those portrayed took an important part in the events of his time, these sketches may also reflect something of the changing historical scene of fifty crowded years. Contemporary personal impressions of this kind, supported by revealing anecdotes, may perhaps, as I suggest later, claim a real, if minor, place among historical sources.

What is gleaned here is from one individual's limited field of experience. Winnowed from the chaff there may be a few grains worth the saving. But I write too in the hope that even what does not instruct may perhaps entertain.

PROLOGUE

There is a fireside game that all historians, and others whose work requires the appraisal of personal evidence, ought often to play for the good of their souls. The company present, say twenty or so, sit in a row or a circle. The person at one end invents a tale and whispers it to his neighbour on the left; he in turn whispers it to the next one, and so till the last of all, who then repeats aloud what he or she has heard. The original inventor of the tale then also repeats aloud what he had first whispered. The difference reflects the distortion of the intervening memories, with their personal bias and defects. The result is illuminating. It shows the kind of discount which personal evidence needs; and also the bare skeleton of essential fact that usually remains.

Such is a large part, though of course only a part, of what the historian must depend upon. He has as a corrective much documentary and other evidence which is not susceptible to a similar distortion. On the other hand much of the personal evidence which is at the basis of some of his records is subject to a further distortion from which the fireside game is exempt; for those who appear as witnesses are commonly also in some degree participants in the events they speak of and have the special bias that comes from their own rôle.

I once had an experience of personal evidence in relation to a minor historical incident. I resolved that, if I ever attempted to write history myself, I would tell the tale as a warning to myself and others. I shall never now want it for that purpose, but I may perhaps suitably insert it as a Prologue to the series of sketches and anecdotes which are to follow.

Prologue

I will first recite the bare facts, as they are proved by impersonal records and as they remain constant through all the several personal accounts.

After the great Greek disaster in Asia Minor in 1922, when the Turks drove over a million Greeks into the sea at Smyrna, or in hopeless, destitute flight as refugees back to the European homeland of their ancestors, there was a revolution in Athens. The new Government executed their predecessors. This exaction of retribution from a Government for a political and military folly or crime and disaster was more shocking to the civilized western world at that time than it would perhaps be now. In any event, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, was so horrified that, to mark his disapproval, he at once withdrew the British Minister—Mr. (now Sir Francis) Lindley—from Athens. There was no other post immediately available for him, and he was bound to remain for some time ‘*en disponibilité*’. As he would in the ordinary course of events have been staying in Athens till he was transferred to another Legation or Embassy, and was a married man with a family, there was naturally an immediate problem as to where he should live in the meantime. Ultimately, after some delay, a solution was found by placing at his disposal a summer residence associated with the British Embassy in Italy.

So much for the bare facts; now for the somewhat different angle of vision from which they were regarded by those principally concerned.

Shortly after Lindley’s recall to England, I was on League of Nations business in Vienna. I called one afternoon at the British Legation to have tea with the British Minister (Mr. Akers-Douglas, later Viscount Chilston). His wife was there, having just returned from England, where she had seen Lindley, a personal friend. Lindley had given her an account of his personal predicament. ‘Curzon recalled me at a moment’s notice as a political protest. That was all very well for him; but it put me in a hole. I found myself stranded, with a family and without a house. I did my best to make the

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Foreign Office realize that, as they'd moved me, not because of anything for which I was responsible, but for a political purpose, it was clearly up to them to find me something else suitable. I could at first get nothing out of them. But happily I had a bright idea. I remembered there was a very pleasant summer residence attached to the British Embassy in Italy, and that at this time of the year it would probably be vacant. I did everything I could to get the Foreign Office to make the necessary request to the Ambassador, Ronald Graham. Happily I succeeded, and he was quite agreeable, so I am just going to take my family out and we shall be all right till I get my next job.'

A few days later I returned to Geneva, and found myself at dinner next to Lord Curzon, who had come across from Lausanne where he had been in a Conference with the Turks. After dinner he began to expatiate on the manifold and complex cares and responsibilities of a Foreign Secretary, so little realized by the public. 'Let me give you a minor example,' he said. 'You know I've just withdrawn Lindley from Athens. You doubtless think that all I had to do was to take the decision, important perhaps but essentially simple, to make this obviously appropriate protest against a shocking act. Not at all. That was only the beginning. I remembered for example that Lindley has a family and that, when withdrawn suddenly in this way, he would probably find it difficult to make satisfactory arrangements for them; and since his withdrawal was my own political decision I felt a personal responsibility in the matter. It was a trivial but not altogether easy problem. Happily, however, a very suitable idea occurred to me. I recollected that there was a summer residence of the British Embassy in Italy and was able to arrange with Ronald Graham to lend it to him. I understand that Lindley is very pleased with the arrangement.'

A few days later I had to go to Rome. I called on the Ambassador. We met in his study which looked out on to a pleasing garden. By way of starting the conversation I said, 'What a delightful garden you have.' 'Yes,' said Ronald

Prologue

Graham, 'it is pleasant. But it's nothing to compare with the one at my summer residence. I say "my residence", but in fact it's not exactly mine at the moment. You will have seen about poor Lindley being suddenly withdrawn from Athens. Well, when I heard of it I remembered of course that he has a family, and might be in a difficult position while waiting for another job. So I thought it would be a friendly thing to offer to lend it to him. He accepted at once and I believe is very comfortable there.'

Here then were three accounts of the same incident as I remembered them rather more than twenty years later. Two of them were first-hand, the other at one remove. Had I been a historian trying to ascertain the truth from this evidence, I should have noted that the main facts were common to every account, and these I should have accepted. But there were obviously three different angles of vision as to the respective contributions to the final result. The tale had gone through three refracting minds. Where there were differences the account I had received in Vienna was perhaps to be preferred, because, though unlike the other two it was second-hand, it was intrinsically more probable.

But I said 'three refracting minds'. I should have said 'four', for there was mine too, with the bias of a narrator to make the best of a tale. I have done my best to set down exactly, and without distortion, just what I remembered. But I kept no record at the time. Who could tell how far I might have sharpened and distorted the tale in the process of recalling and recounting it? Not I.

I can now, however, carry the tale one step further. I have now for the first time asked Sir Francis Lindley directly for his own account. His recollection is clear and definite, and it enables the bias of the others, including my own, to be assessed and corrected.

At the time of his recall, he tells me, his children had scarlet fever, and he had to leave his family for the moment at Athens. He went himself to Lausanne, where Lord Curzon was at the Conference with the Turks. While there he had

Prologue

a letter from his wife suggesting that the family might well spend the winter at Posillipo, the property given by Lord Rosebery to the Embassy at Rome. He thereupon himself wrote to Sir Ronald Graham, the Ambassador, whom he knew personally; and Sir Ronald put one of the lesser villas on the estate at his disposal, the main villa being occupied by someone else. The Foreign Office did not come into the question (that, I think, must have been an unintentional invention of my own). He may, he says, have mentioned what had been arranged to Lord Curzon (and indeed he must have done so, in view of what Curzon said subsequently at Geneva).

Here then is the truth, as nearly as personal evidence can ever give it, for Sir Francis' interest in the incident, unlike that of the others, is clearly of the kind which engraves the detail indelibly on the mind without distorting it. When the historian can draw upon evidence of this kind he is exceptionally fortunate. More often, however, when in the absence of contemporary records he has to use personal evidence, this evidence is of the kind which is illustrated in the previous accounts I have given. It is for this reason that I think they serve as a useful reminder to the historian, and the reader, of the need always to allow for the factor of personal bias.

Much that follows in these sketches comes from my own personal recollections, which, though deceptively clear in my mind as I write, may yet be inaccurate in some of their detail. For such unwitting errors this prologue is a warning and an apology.

PERSONALITY IN HISTORY

History is the net result of the interaction of impersonal forces and the personalities of those who are in positions of authority. There will doubtless always be differences and alternations of fashion in the public estimation of the relative importance of the two factors. Determinist theory may seem for a generation to make nonsense of the 'great man' treatment of historical development. Then, in an era of dictators and great leaders, this in turn may appear to be doctrinaire and unreal. The balance tips quickly, and there may for a time be a tendency to regard historical events simply in terms of the interaction of the personalities and policies of a Hitler, a Stalin, a Churchill, a Roosevelt. At such a time it may be important to emphasize the aspect of the truth that for the moment is more likely to be obscured. We need to make an effort to realize that a Hitler is only a powerful force because he reflects and evokes, because there is a special congruity between his qualities and the temper of his time or his country. A century earlier, or later, and Hitler might have remained an obscure house-painter and corporal; and even a Churchill might have been only an eminent, not a transcendent, personality. Those, however, who impress themselves on events differ greatly in their relation to the forces in their environment. A Hitler, for example, may only appear in response to already existing national passions and is rather their mouthpiece or their instrument than an originating force. A Churchill, on the other hand—like Pitt before him—resists a hopeless drift till he ultimately reverses it. Nor is it only strength that forms the links in the chain of historical causation. The weakness of the blunderers, of the well-intentioned who happen to be

Personality in History

in a crucial position of authority—a Czar Nicholas II or a Louis XVI—may be no less important.

In truth, however, the relative importance of the two factors, of circumstance and personality, varies greatly from age to age in actual fact and not only in men's opinion. In our own era, when the technical apparatus of government or compulsion has so greatly increased, the importance of the personal qualities of those in supreme position is correspondingly greater. This is true in other spheres than that of politics. In the nineteenth century, for example, when the economic activities of the world were, with minor and measurable exceptions, within a laissez-faire system, economics could more nearly than in this century attain the character of an exact science, capable of both analysis and prophecy. For though personal factors, human desires and motives were involved, these were the desires and motives of innumerable individuals acting separately and under the impulse of incentives of which the capricious cancel out and the stable are few and ascertainable. In the mass such human factors can be generalized and calculated, for though the individual reaction to a given situation may be doubtful, the net result in millions of cases is statistically certain, within a narrow margin of error. The position is very different when a single person can change the course of economic development. The economist who was asked to prophesy whether there would be a depression or a boom in the period, for example, of President Roosevelt's 'New Deal' policy had a very different, and intrinsically less soluble, problem. The answer might at a given moment depend upon whether a single person, Roosevelt, having the necessary power in his hands, would decide to depreciate the currency or not. Economic prophecy under such conditions could at best be only conditional, for nothing in his training could qualify the economist to understand the psychology and the reactions of a single individual as he could understand the net result of the caprices and desires of millions.

If it is true that the politician, like the economist, is less

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able for these reasons to forecast the future, it is equally true that the historian, in attempting to record and explain the past, has now, for similar reasons, a more difficult task. He will need to give a greater weight, in seeking the causes of great events, to the personal action and the personality of great men. More than ever, therefore, he will need to penetrate their psychology.

It is, of course, not only upon the higher plane of the lives of eminent statesmen that the interaction of personal and external factors creates the forces which determine history. The world is not a surface but a globe. In layer below layer there is the interplay of multitudinous diverse individuals with material facts and scientific inventions. What is seen at the surface of history is the fruit of a deep-rooted plant, drawing its sustenance from hidden sources. For the purposes of the historian, however, the influence of personality at these lower levels is a part of his relatively measurable and calculable material like the effects of a new invention. The more important distinction is, therefore, not between personal and material factors, but between, on the one hand, the influence of those who exercise great power and, on the other, the sum total of all the forces, both material and personal, which constitute the environment in which they work.

The historian's task is further complicated by the baffling importance, in the pattern of causation, of the trivial and accidental. The determinist conception of history leads the mind to picture a slowly accumulating mass of forces, in which each new factor has an effect equal to its own weight, like the addition of another man, for example, to one side in a tug-of-war, and to think of causation in terms of a single chain. But in truth causation is more like an intricate web of intertwined threads in three dimensions. The human mind, as expressed in language, can only proceed at a given moment along a single line, one-dimensionally; it cannot present simultaneously depth, breadth and height as a scene on a stage can; the reader needs to construct the whole picture by

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an imaginative effort to combine what has been separately described. And in the total pattern of causation a trivial accident, or trait of character, may have a transforming effect upon the whole.

This, of course, does not amount to saying that all history turns either upon accident or the personality of men in great positions. No man can reverse the main stream of human development. But as a river furrows its channel from its distant watershed to the sea it winds and turns as it finds yielding soil or hard granite in its path. Though its ultimate destination is the ocean, its direction, for hundreds of miles, may be changed by a single rock at a decisive point. Such is the place of the great man in history.

It is the factor of the statesman's personality, increased by the radiating effect of a single act along many chains of causation, which the historian will always find most baffling in his attempt at scientific certainty. Impersonal events can be recorded, documented, weighed and measured, with comparative precision. Evidence as to personality is much less reliable. In a few years myth and legend replace reality. The picture of the person is hopelessly confused by the events with which he was associated, by the passions and controversies of which he was the centre. The result is that instead of a statesman's personality being known, as actual events are known, from contemporary documents, and its influence upon history then being duly assessed, the personality itself is often in history inferred from his recorded action, though this may be due in fact as much to his environment as to himself.

• •

In this the most difficult part of his task, the historian will perhaps find that the more elaborate tools of his scientific equipment are the least useful, and that contemporary impressions of personality and anecdotes may serve him better. The best chance of a dominant personality remaining in the minds of later generations as he really was, and not as a mere projection of his policy and achievement, is that his

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contemporaries should record their own impressions of him together with the incidents which seem to them most significant and revealing. From a multitude of such impressions and incidents something of the authentic person may emerge and remain. The impressions will, of course, differ, coloured as they must be by the bias of their authors; but a residuum of common agreement may remain. They will be the more valuable if they are anchored in the detail of actual incidents; and sometimes the most trivial of these may be the most illuminating.

There is, indeed, no lack, in the writing of our time, of portraits and of anecdotes relating to historical persons and events. Too often, however, these are only the embellishment of romantic fiction, of dubious authenticity and little real significance. Serious history can have little contact with such writing, or profit from it. Partly by reaction it often fails, I suggest, to make its own portraits of historical figures real and convincing, or to allow sufficiently for the part which incident and accident play in human affairs. The portraits are two-dimensional projections of the qualities displayed in public acts, without depth or penetration, like the oil-paintings of monarchs in regal robes displayed on the walls of Embassies. Too often in histories the stream of events seems to move on from the watershed to the sea without the tortuous winding and doubling back that in fact so often result from minor causes or the impact of some personal idiosyncrasy of a man who happens to occupy a crucial point in its course.

It is this which gives a value to reminiscence and anecdote. The dangers of abuse and distortion are, however, obvious. They need to be clearly recognized and the appropriate precautions to be taken.

First there may be actual falsity. An anecdote may simply be invented or, if true to start with, may quickly be transformed into something quite different as it passes from one raconteur to another. The danger is, of course, much less if the author's evidence is first-hand, if he is otherwise known

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as a reliable witness and if there is little or nothing in the incident itself likely to give a bias in his own mind.

More misleading is the form of anecdotage which may be classified as 'kitchen-gossip', the repetition of what great men have said in personal conversation by others present at the time who neither share their responsibility nor fully understand the issues discussed. A minor assistant, or a servant, may remember and repeat scraps of conversation which he or she has so heard, and may then retail them in a way which gives a completely false impression of the men concerned, their opinions, and their relations to each other. Great men, like other men who think they are talking privately, and without risk of publicity, often indulge in a form of banter which is partly, but only partly, serious, or make remarks which express only a single facet of their mind or opinion, relying upon those to whom they are speaking not to take what they say for more than it is worth. Such remarks, repeated out of their context, will give a distorted picture, even if they are not, as will often happen, inaccurately quoted through a defect of memory, or the bias of the relater's own personal views or prejudices.

When the narrator is an actual participant in a conversation and in the affairs to which it relates, the case is, of course, very different. He should have a more responsible view as to whether a breach of confidence is involved and, understanding both the nature of the discussion and the subject-matter, is less likely to misrepresent them. At the same time a protagonist has the inevitable bias of his own opinion and outlook, and this too may cause a certain distortion that needs to be discounted.

In an intermediate class the narrator is one who has held a responsible, but a specialized and subordinate, job which gives him an exact knowledge of one aspect, but one only, of the problems involved in what he relates. The danger in this case, which will of course vary with the individual, is that perspective will be lost and the general picture impaired by being viewed from a single angle of vision. This risk will

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be the greater if there is intense loyalty to one of the protagonists and temperamental dislike of another.

Each of these defects requires its appropriate corrective. A historian, or a reader who desires to get understanding as well as entertainment from anecdotal records, must discriminate and discount. He will note whether the narrator is a first-hand witness of what he narrates (or clearly distinguishes between what he has himself seen or heard and what he has learnt from others). He will note and allow for the bias likely to result from the narrator's personal participation in the events narrated. He will distinguish between anecdotes which are obviously told merely because they are amusing in themselves and those which have been selected as significant illustrations of an important trait of character. And, above all, he will note what is common to the different accounts given by others. In varying degrees all are likely to be coloured by personal bias, but if a number are available one bias will be corrected by another.

If, however, adequate precautions of this kind are taken, contemporary personal impressions, and selected anecdotes which either illustrate character or the part which the trivial and the accidental play in the causal sequence of events, merit, I suggest, a real place among the materials of history and a rather more important one than has usually been accorded to them. Anecdotalage is the humblest of the servants of Clio, but not the least attractive and, it may be, not the least valuable.

A. J. BALFOUR

THE ARISTOCRAT IN POLITICS

A. J. Balfour' (for it is the Great Commoner that will survive, as Disraeli has survived the Earl of Beaconsfield) is the best example in modern British history of the aristocrat in public life. He had the qualities, and some of the handicaps, associated with an assured fortune and hereditary culture.

With his tall, willowy and graceful figure, now stooping, now with head flung back, his delicate hands clasping the satin lapels of his long frock coat, he had an air of the feminine and fragile—like a Madonna lily, as Wells once said. He was versatile, with wide and dispersed interests ranging over politics, philosophy, religion, music, and literature, and he touched nothing that he did not adorn. He had the appearance, and sometimes perhaps the pose, of the brilliant amateur.

His youth was divided between the gay sallies of the privateering Fourth Party, the society at once precious and élite of such groups as the 'Souls', an intellectual interest in philosophy and religion, and a taste and talent for music. In Parliament he gave the impression at this time of dilettantism. It was a profoundly mistaken impression. A few years later, in responsible office as Irish Secretary at a time of peculiar difficulty, he revealed unexpected strength and resolution. He acted with energy and instant decision. He pursued a drastic policy with undeviating purpose. He was unyielding under pressure and careless of popularity. His courage, both physical and moral, was then, as always, untouchable.

A. J. Balfour

In a political environment which he knew well his instinct was both subtle and sure. His methods might sometimes seem involved and indecisive, but they were in fact tactics masking a resolute strategy. In his Prime Ministership, for example, after the snatched success of the 'khaki' election, he was confronted with the tariff reform campaign of Joseph Chamberlain. He turned and twisted and procrastinated; but he was all the time skilfully and patiently pursuing his purpose of maintaining the unity of his party. For three years he postponed, though he could not prevent, the cleavage. After he lost the supreme office in 1905, never to return to it, he still had before him twenty-five years of public activity; and it is in this period, the most fruitful of his life, that the strength and greatness of his character are best revealed. Though he was a Conservative to the end and in the roots of his being, he willingly accepted office under the great tribune of the people, Lloyd George, served him loyally throughout the war and afterwards as First Lord of the Admiralty, as Foreign Secretary, as British representative at Washington, and never failed to recognize and admit qualities in his chief which he did not himself possess. On his mission to Washington in 1917, in the first days of America's belligerency, and at the Naval Conference in 1921, he showed once more that a British representative abroad is better qualified if he embodies the best of his own country's traditions than if he is indistinguishable from those to whom he is accredited. It is significant that, more clearly than by anything in his earlier years, the latent passions and idealism of his nature are revealed by his devotion in his old age to the cause of a national home for the Jews, and by some of his patient, unalluring work at Geneva.

All this is true. But there was another side to Balfour's character. Especially from the angle of an official's observation, the enigma of his personality was the curious intermittency of his interest and energy. When he cared little, he cared not at all. If he was not interested—and how often he was not!—it was hard indeed to break through his indifference

The Aristocrat in Politics

and procrastination. With his many other interests, the work of a Minister was often sheer boredom. There were long intervals of apparent lethargy, though he could shake it off and act with vigour and decision in any crisis that touched his deeper purposes and emotions. There were limits, too, to his vision, and his appreciation of the changes that were taking place around him. If his political instinct was sure in an environment to which it was long accustomed, it failed him when the environment changed. He was sometimes insensitive to the deeper current opinions which no statesman can control or without fatal consequences ignore; and during his years as Prime Minister, for example, he failed to gauge the strength of the new popular forces that were gathering against him.

It is the positive side of his character, and its strength, however, that are now likely to be under-rated and now need to be emphasized. His manner of aloof courtesy guarded an impenetrable reserve, and an unyielding purpose. His urbanity masked an iron will. Deep passion would suddenly erupt as from a volcano never extinct though long quiescent. He was iron—or rather tempered steel—painted to look like a lath.

The significant anecdotes are those which reflect these paradoxically combined qualities.

‘A.J.B.’ was Prime Minister when I entered the Admiralty as a junior clerk in the autumn of 1904. A disturbing incident, of which I caught a few departmental echoes, reflected his quality. The doomed Russian fleet of Admiral Rodjesvensky emerged from the Baltic on its way round Europe, Africa and Asia to the Japan Sea. In the baffling mists of the North Sea it encountered some English trawlers, fired on them and killed some of the fishermen. What followed showed how little even the most stolid and pacific of peoples can be trusted to keep their heads under sudden and intense provocation. The explanation should have been obvious. Trawlers can easily, with poor visibility, be mistaken for torpedo boats.

A. J. Balfour

Some such vessels were known to be under construction to Japanese order on the Tyne. A few days later, when the danger was past, a letter was published which the writer had tried in vain to get into the Press during the crisis, giving an extract from the official report of some recent British Fleet manoeuvres in which an exactly similar mistake had occurred (though of course in that case it was harmless as blank charges were used). The Russian Admiral was doubtless panicky and seriously culpable. To think, however, for a moment, of war against Russia for such a reason was sheer madness. Yet to judge by the Press at the time, with its calls for strong action, war might well have happened with a Prime Minister who could not keep his head better than most of the public did at that moment. The gallant and impetuous Admiral Beresford was then in command of the British Fleet off Gibraltar; he at once stationed his ships near the Straits, cleared the decks for action, and prepared to intercept the Russians as they passed into the Mediterranean; he also, I believe, cabled as to plans for attacking through the Dardanelles. Balfour handled the situation instantly, firmly, and without losing his head. He demanded and secured investigation and compensation. A speech of his at Southampton marked the end of the crisis. There was no longer any question of war.

In the latter part of the first World War, when 'A.J.B.' was Foreign Secretary and I was Director of Ship Requisitioning, I was concerned in an incident which throws some light on one side of his character; and though the tale is rather long it is perhaps worth telling. The younger naval officers in the Admiralty concerned with the organization of convoys (with whom I was in constant and intimate touch) were very dissatisfied with the meagre contribution the Italians were making to convoy work in the Mediterranean; they knew the Italians were keeping destroyers, which could have been very useful as escorts, safe in harbour, and all efforts to induce the Italian Admiralty to bring them out had failed. I was asked if I could bring some pressure to bear.

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I was in a good position to do so, for the Italians were dependent upon coal imports from Cardiff in British ships, of which the allocation was in my hands. I was never able to supply as many as they wanted—and indeed needed—but there was of course always a certain margin for the discretionary assignment of a few more or less. I was therefore in a position to say in effect ‘if you provide the destroyers, I will give you the colliers’. Pressure quite so naked, however, was neither courteous to an Ally, nor indeed properly within my official authority. I did my best, therefore, to observe the decencies by constructing an argument, which had at least some solid nucleus of reality, of a more respectable kind. I said, ‘I have no colliers to spare: but the more frequently convoys can run, the more coal can be carried in a given time by a given number of colliers; the frequency of the convoys depends on the number of destroyers available to escort them; if therefore you can provide extra destroyers, there will be an economy in the employment of merchant ships, and I shall be able to allot some more colliers to you, as in present circumstances I cannot’. This did not wholly persuade, or deceive, the Italian representatives, who continued to ask for the colliers and withhold the destroyers. At that moment I had to go hurriedly to Paris, and I left without, I fear, adequately informing my Minister, Sir Joseph (now Lord) Maclay, of what I had done and the reasons for it. While I was away the Italians appealed over my head. Sir Joseph Maclay was sent for to explain the case at Downing Street, where there were of course no Italian representatives present; no decision was reached and the question was adjourned till the next meeting. In the interval I returned to London and Sir Joseph went to Scotland—leaving no record of his appearance at the first meeting. I was summoned for the renewed discussion. As I entered, the Prime Minister (Lloyd George) mentioned the subject of Italian colliers (without any reference to the fact that it had already been discussed) and asked me to explain the position. I did so, with rather more elaboration of technical detail than I have now described. When I

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had finished, to my horror, Lord Milner said, 'That is an interesting account, but it seems to me at every essential point completely inconsistent with the account Sir Joseph gave us of the same matter at our last meeting. I have a clear recollection of what he told us.' Milner then repeated a much simplified account, which was indeed inconsistent with what I had said. This was the first I had heard of any report having already been made and considered, and I turned to Sir Maurice (now Lord) Hankey and asked him what had happened. He replied, 'What Milner has said is exact—you're in for it, my boy.' I saw myself confronted with the painful dilemma of saying either that my account was inaccurate, or that my Chief's was. Each horn of the dilemma was equally unpleasant and I determined to escape if I could. I said that what I had recounted was accurate at the moment I spoke, but shipping programmes and arrangements were constantly changing and could become very different in a few days. I turned for support to Lord Jellicoe, who was at my side. He knew nothing of the particular case but rallied nobly in support of a colleague in distress. He said it was indeed true that shipping problems changed with astonishing rapidity. I thought for a moment that I might get away with it. But Milner continued icily: 'I find it difficult to believe that a few days can make so much difference; let me sum up the points of conflict.' What he said, however, still left me an opening and I continued to twist and turn, not without some success. By this time most of the Ministers had sensed the real position—that the first report by Sir Joseph was at least inadequate. They had had a long and wearying meeting and were not disinclined for an agreeable interlude devoted to the sport of catching out the official, especially as I was giving them something of a run for their money. One after the other, Mr. Churchill and several more put questions which I managed to turn.

But then, to my dismay, Balfour roused himself from what had apparently been a long spell of bored inattention and said he would like to cross-examine me. He did so, pressing

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me step after step, with an inexorable logic, till at last—after every twist and turn I could manage—I saw ‘check-mate’ was inevitable only one or two moves ahead. I saw myself forced to choose one or other horn of the dilemma—and was still uncertain which to take. Then—at the very last moment—the doors were flung open: a messenger entered and said ‘Air raid warning.’ It was the day after a serious German daylight raid on London and further raids were expected. Lloyd George rose at once to adjourn the meeting. ‘A.J.B.’ said, ‘I think we can finish up this matter in a minute or two more, if we continue’ (which was certainly true). But Lloyd George said firmly, ‘No, we have made rules for others, we must obey them ourselves. We will retire to the Foreign Office cellars.’ By sheer luck, and against all expectation, I was saved. I suppose I was the only person in London that day to whom the air raid warning brought a vivid and undiluted emotion of joy.

‘A.J.B.’ and I left Downing Street together, but we did not go to the Foreign Office. We walked together across the Horse Guards Parade. It is characteristic of him that he never even troubled to ask me the final crushing question he had not been allowed to put before. He knew the truth, of course. By sheer accident he had failed to get his kill, but he had neither curiosity nor annoyance. The luck was mine and he did not grudge it. His only comment, as we walked across the Parade, was, ‘Foreign Office cellars! Good God! I’ve been Foreign Secretary for years and I didn’t know there was such a place!’

And here is a postscript. It was not an air raid after all. After the previous day’s serious raid the Government had telegraphed to Trenchard (then in command of our air forces in France) to come over for a consultation about future defences. He had stepped into a ‘plane but something had gone wrong with the notifications ahead; his ‘plane had been taken for an enemy one and the warning sounded. Many years later I recalled the incident. He well remembered his flight, but did not know till I told him of one of its minor consequences in 10 Downing Street.

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A few days after the incident I saw my Chief, on his return from Scotland, and told him what I had been let in for. He was quite unrepentant and laughed heartily at my predicament. 'What you said was of course quite right but it was much too complicated for those "10 Downing Street fellows"; I gave them something simpler.'

The next incident I think worth recalling was a few years later, when the Council of the new League of Nations had a meeting in Paris at which Balfour was the British representative. I had just ceased to be General Secretary of the Reparation Commission, and returned to my place in the League. I was again a member of the Secretariat, but had had no part in preparing the business of this particular meeting. There was one item of the agenda which was expected to be a formality only. Albania had some months before asked the League to nominate a financial adviser to advise on the national finances, doubtless with the idea that he might also help later in securing financial assistance from external capital. It was evident that a good deal might depend upon the way in which Albania shaped her course at this time, and the League had taken a great deal of trouble to select the right man. A small international committee had been appointed, under the Chairmanship of the distinguished Swedish financier, M. Wallenberg, and after careful enquiry had unanimously selected an Englishman for the post: their recommendation was now submitted for formal approval and everyone had expected that this would be given immediately without discussion. But M. Poincaré was then Président du Conseil; no document or report ever escaped his vigilant eye; and it happened that he had the same day noticed a report from a French consul in Albania that a local source of oil had been discovered and also that the Council of the League had before it a proposal to appoint an Englishman as financial adviser to the Albanian Government. The coincidence roused his suspicions and he telephoned to the French representative, M. Viviani, to block the proposal. M. Viviani, whose theme was so often inferior to his beautiful voice and matchless skill

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in using it—he was like a supreme violinist playing jingles on a Stradivarius—discharged his task with enthusiasm. When the question was put he amazed everyone present by an eloquent discourse on British imperialism and oil. We all waited with interest for the reply of the British representative to this astonishing outburst. When it came, it was, in a bored and indifferent voice, no more than this: ‘There seems to be some difficulty about this appointment; I suggest that it should be adjourned till the next meeting.’ When the Council was over I walked across the room with ‘A.J.B.’ and tried to draw him by asking what he thought of Viviani’s speech. All I got was: ‘What a beautiful voice! What a beautiful voice!’

The sequel was unfortunate. No satisfactory alternative was available. An adviser with inappropriate qualities, of another nationality, was at last appointed. The Albanian Government, after some experience, considered him impossible and snubbed the League by cancelling his appointment. The League, between a bad conscience and hurt dignity, could neither effectively protest nor name a successor. By this time Mussolini was dictator in Rome. He offered an Italian adviser, with some Italian help. The offer was accepted; the association of Italy with Albanian affairs was developed to an ultimate conclusion of which we are all aware.

A very different aspect of Balfour’s character is illustrated by another incident of the same year in which Italian policy was involved. In the summer of 1922 a skilful, and ultimately successful, plan for the financial reconstruction of Austria had been evolved by the Financial Committee of the League. It required for its success the co-operation (political as well as financial) of Austria’s neighbours, Italy and Czechoslovakia, as well as Great Britain and France. The order to proceed had to come from the Council, which, with the Assembly, was meeting at Geneva in September. There were ominous signs that Italy, whose participation had been forthcoming in earlier months, would break away: new forces

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were stirring in the country then, and the March on Rome was to take place within a month. Those of us who were principally concerned in the project had an anxious midnight consultation. We came to the conclusion that the only way in which the danger of fatal division in the Council (of which Italy was of course an important member) could be averted was that there should be an impressive demonstration of world opinion at the Assembly. The only opportunity was at the meeting the following afternoon. I was deputed to try to get Balfour to give a lead. I could not get him till he arrived the next morning at the League building, where he was to preside at a Committee meeting three flights of stairs up. He said at once that he was not prepared to speak; but he listened while I summarized the reasons for doing so as we walked the first flight; he reflected as we walked up the second flight, and then said he thought I was right and asked me to suggest points to make while we went up the third. He was continuously engaged all the morning in handling a difficult committee, was swept off by car from that to an international lunch, and from that direct to the Assembly—where he went on to the platform and, without having had a minute for undisturbed reflection, made a speech which swept the Delegates—and secured the result. The first European reconstruction scheme, novel, difficult and far-reaching in its results, the greatest technical achievement of the League in all its early years, was safely carried past its most dangerous crisis.

Lethargy alternating with intense energy; sceptical indifference with strong purpose—the characteristics which were so long and so often displayed on an ampler scene in Ireland, in Palestine, in Washington, in all the wide-ranging responsibilities of a Prime Minister—were perhaps revealed as clearly in the trivial incidents which I have here recalled.

In an age in which power has shifted elsewhere, Balfour's personality is above all interesting as a mirror of what

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aristocracy meant in the preceding period of British politics, and of the distinctive qualities of mind and temperament it brought to the public service. It is to this aspect that I devote my concluding illustrations.

His physical and moral courage was of the kind which represents not a triumph of will, but a constitutional indifference to danger. Lady Oxford (Margot Asquith) told me she was once with him in a car which suddenly skidded violently and narrowly escaped a precipitous ravine. He was talking with animation at the time, and with only a moment's pause continued without the slightest perturbation. A Swiss friend who witnessed his conduct on a dangerous mission in the Middle East was similarly struck with his unruffled calm. There was at the same time something in his appearance and manner, languid and apparently trifling, which always made his quality of inner strength surprising to those who first witnessed it. It required an issue which touched his deeper convictions and emotions to rouse him to instant and decisive action. It was above all an issue which seemed to him to challenge law and order, the basic traditions of the British political system—the supremacy of law or of Parliamentary government—that had this effect. It is no accident that the first occasion on which the House of Commons saw in him more than a brilliant trifler was when he assailed the 'infamy' of Gladstone's alleged Kilmainham Treaty; and that it was in his suppression of the Land Campaign in Ireland that he proved himself, to the general amazement at the time, a strong and ruthless administrator. Nor has any Prime Minister of our time so lucidly and directly stated the limits of a constitutional monarch when he thought those limits had been overstepped. His assured position, the width and range of his interests, exempted him completely from the baser temptations of personal ambition. He was not without ambition, indeed, but it was inseparably intertwined with the policy he wished to pursue and preserve. To conquer he was capable of a courteous inclination, but he would not stoop. His strength, and its limitation, both came from the

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fact that he was deeply rooted in the past, in the long evolution of British political development, in the culture with which it was associated. He did not easily assimilate the new. It is, for example, characteristic that, with his great enjoyment of music, it was to Beethoven and Handel that he turned, and found little to admire in anyone later. His anchor was dropped deep. It held him secure through passing storms. But he could not easily discern the signs of a hurricane, when the occasion required the navigator to raise anchor and seek the open sea. For his last three years as Prime Minister he manoeuvred skilfully in his accustomed anchorage, but the storm that was rising was in fact a tempest and the result was that his craft was not merely buffeted but wrecked.

It is significant that he welcomed an extension of the franchise because he thought that it would bring, not the form of democracy which we are now witnessing, but a reinforcement to conservatism—as indeed for a time it did, but for a time only. The deeper currents moving in his later life seemed outside his vision, his sympathy, and his power to handle. It is equally characteristic that, an incomparable debater in the kind of House of Commons he had known, he was less at home in later Parliaments and never at home on a public platform.

His grace of manner, courtesy and charm were at the same time an impenetrable barrier for almost all intimacy. He was, as his biographer records, a solitary at heart. And he had none of the half-bantering, facile camaraderie which is so common in political association. He was less at ease in the smoking room than on the Treasury Bench.

Few men who have once tasted the power that is associated with the supreme political office ever lose it without visible regret. Balfour was perhaps among these rare exceptions. He turned to the pleasures of a life of cultured leisure (broken, after his resignation from leadership of his Party in 1911, only by intermittent spells of public work) with apparent relief; and the spur to action in the work of his

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later years was positive interest in the particular task, a deep patriotism and a sense of duty and of the obligations of his class and traditions. I happened to be with him when he was asked to go to Washington for the Naval Conference of 1921. The prospect was clearly not a pleasing one; he was 73; it was an arduous and difficult mission, and incidentally it meant an uncomfortable sea voyage for one who was a shockingly bad sailor. I asked him whether he would accept. He looked at me in surprise—‘Of course. I must go if I’m wanted.’ No other alternative seemed possible to him if those with whom the responsibility rested thought the public interest required him. But neither then nor at other times did personal ambition, or the itch for power once enjoyed and since lost, move him. His nostalgia was for much that was more irretrievably lost than personal power.

In some countries an aristocracy has been corrupted by luxury. In some, as in Russia, it has provoked destruction by its excesses. In some, as in Italy, it has voluntarily lost its hold on political power through indifference or irresponsibility. In some, as in France, it has been rudely and suddenly thrust out of authority by a revolution. The fate of the British aristocracy has been characteristically different. It has gradually slipped, been gently, and still only partially, elbowed from its former estate. No personality in British political history serves so well as Balfour’s to remind us of what will be lost if the process is to be completed.

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Contemporary appreciations of a statesman who has outlived his great period for many years are almost necessarily inadequate. Recent memories of diminished influence and failing powers cloud the picture of the real man and of his achievement. He remains in the recollection of his immediate successors as he was in the years they recall most clearly, and a special effort is needed to remember what he was in earlier years and set this in the dominant position which it merits. Most of the principal British statesmen who were born in the nineteenth century were singularly fortunate in this respect. The British system regards age as a qualification for the highest office rather than a disability, as the careers of Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli and Salisbury all show; and a Winston Churchill may find his supreme expression in his seventh decade and be the greatest of elder statesmen in his eighth. And when retirement from the highest office comes it is normally softened by leadership of a great opposition party, and alternative Government, with a prospect of return to power.

Lloyd George was an exception to this fortunate experience. He ceased to be Prime Minister in 1922. He lost at once and for ever both office and all great responsibility. He remained as a great personality—and a great voice from the past—but *vox et praeterea nihil*. His dynamic energy was always at its best when yoked to a great task; at other times he was like a powerful motor which is thrown out of gear, races, and may cause and suffer damage. In the twenty-three years which intervened between his loss of office and

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his death his own personal quality necessarily suffered, and those who look at these years will see not only a waning influence but a changing man. It is the more necessary to break through the intervening screen of years, to concentrate attention, as the later historian must, on the two decades in which he towered, in commanding eminence, over the public life of his country, of Europe, and—for a time—the world; to see what manner of man he then was. History will have ample materials to assess what he did, but it is well perhaps that younger contemporaries should recall, before it is too late, some of the personal impressions of the man himself.

The picture of him in his later years is familiar to all; a body of medium stature; a massive head; a face in which there was something at once of the lion, the sheep and the goat; a crown of white hair wildly flowing in the wind; unmistakably a Welshman and a Celt; a voice, a glance, a manner, which to the end retained their magnetic quality—a figure at once heroic and romantic. In youth he was, by comparison, trim, agile, restless and dynamic. In middle life he had, besides high office, a presence and personal quality which would themselves have made him dominant in any company in which he might be found.

No man in his great period approached him in his combination of creative force, courage and magnetism. I recall, shortly before the first world war, a tirade by a political opponent who was later killed in that war. He was a Conservative, an English country gentleman and a High Churchman. He was bitterly antipathetic to Lloyd George as a radical demagogue, as a Celt and as a Nonconformist. After a long denunciation of every aspect of his hated opponent's policy and personality, he paused for some moments, and then, in a different voice, added, 'But, having said all that, if England is ever fighting for her life, I would choose him as our leader.' This was at a time when Lloyd George was known to the public, not as a war leader, but as the man who had opposed the Boer War and was a protagonist in opposing the estimates of the fighting services. The evidence of the

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impression of dynamic force which he made is the more striking because of the time and the man from whom it came.

My next instance comes from the period of the war, but in the earlier part of it when Lloyd George was Minister of Munitions. His opposite number, Albert Thomas, Minister of Munitions of France, took him to Verdun. The two, so Thomas told me later, there met some hundreds of French soldiers, momentarily withdrawn from the line for a hasty meal in a large underground shelter. They spoke no English, Lloyd George spoke no French. But he raised his glass with 'Vive la France!' and a few added words of deep emotion. His personality radiated from him and swept his listeners. 'There was not one of those men who would not then have died for him. I have never known such personal magnetism,' said Thomas, himself rich in the quality.

It is easier to illustrate, than to analyse, the personal quality to which all, or almost all, who ever met him were at once susceptible. At the heart of it, of course, was an intense vitality, which quickened the life of all about him. Most men who exert a kind of magnetic influence upon others are drained and exhausted in the process: 'virtue goes out of them.' But Lloyd George's vitality seemed less to expend itself than to draw sustenance from others. He discerned what they were thinking and feeling, and fed his own springs of vitality by external impacts. He lived the life of an extrovert and yet had the strength of the introvert's inner life. He disliked solitude, and he preferred always to get what others could give him in speech rather than in writing. He found refreshment, not in solitary meditation, but either in sleep (which he could command at will) or in easy, chaffing conversation with those congenial to him. Like Churchill he would sleep for a time in the middle of the day, and like Napoleon he could always snatch a few moments of sleep in any interval, however brief, of work.

I was Masterman's private secretary in a period when he and Lord Reading were Lloyd George's closest intimates

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among his colleagues, and was very frequently present when they met. It was always amazing to me that, at a time of great anxiety and responsibility—he was fighting the Insurance Bill through and he had the Marconi affair on his hands—he could spend so much time in mere banter and chaff, but it was in this way that he obtained the relaxation that others find in solitary rest. In such a company, though they were men of strong and striking personality, the intimacy was sufficiently close to make light, chaffing talk, without strain, possible. In other cases Lloyd George turned for relief to a circle of cronies of obviously inferior quality with whom any conflict of will was out of the question. All Prime Ministers need relief from the strain that is always imposed by the conflict of strong wills. It is to Lloyd George's credit that he found his relief outside, and not inside, his actual work. He never feared, and indeed always sought, strong personalities in his Government; he did not lighten his Cabinet task, as some have done, by choosing weak colleagues.

With this vitality was something of Celtic mysticism and the stuff of which poetry is made. In all his great speeches the plane is raised by passages of lofty poetry rich in imagery and simile. And in all of them the oratory was born of close responsive intimacy with his audience. His mood, as he spoke, changed with theirs, and he both gave and drew inspiration. In the form of oratory which depends upon a magnetic appeal to the emotions, as distinct from the theme and the classic phrasing of Churchill's, he was incomparably the greatest of his time in his own country; and both on the platform and in Parliament oratory of this kind was relieved and adorned with inimitable wit and humour. The combination, usually on a platform and often in Parliament, was irresistible. At a great public meeting such as the once famous one at Limehouse he could play on his audience like a great conductor on an orchestra, and, as a friend who witnessed an interruption at that meeting said, 'if he had encouraged the audience to do so, they would have torn the interrupter limb from limb'. Something remains in the written record of such

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speeches, but less proportionately to their influence at the time than with almost every other great orator; the magical effect was something born of the mood and emotions of the moment and perishing with them.

The same qualities, of eloquence, poetry, magnetism and wit were also to be seen in more personal and intimate association, enriched further with an irresistible personal charm. I recall breakfasting with him, Mrs. Lloyd George, and one or two members of the family. He was in his best form, as he was usually from the moment he woke—most men prefer a solitary or silent breakfast and take time to warm up like a cold engine, but he never. He convulsed us all with one tale after the other. When he paused for a moment, Mrs. Lloyd George, with the tears running down her face with laughter, turned to me and said, 'You wouldn't think I should laugh so at his jokes after all these years, would you? But I can't help it.' It made a 'conversation piece' of a peculiarly pleasing domestic scene.

A companion picture occurs to me. A critical question arose at the week-end in connection with the National Health Insurance Commission (with which I was working at the time), which required urgent ministerial decision. Two other officials and myself went to see C. F. G. Masterman, the Minister directly concerned, on the Sunday afternoon. He decided that Lloyd George himself must be consulted, and we all went round to 11 Downing Street to tea, Rufus Isaacs (Lord Reading) being at some stage added to the party. When we arrived we found Lloyd George, with Mrs. Lloyd George and other members of his family, standing round the piano singing hymns with great gusto. We were all swept in, making, I fear, a rather incongruous chorus for such an occupation.

A few days later I saw him in a very different, but at least equally characteristic, scene. It was for a time uncertain whether the great Industrial Assurance Societies (as distinct from the old Friendly Societies) would be incorporated in the new scheme as approved societies. When it was decided to

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include them, many questions required decision as to the exact conditions of their inclusion and method of co-operation. A conference with their representatives was convened. They were tough and hardened business men. Industrial insurance is organized on the basis of a very large body of 'collectors', who are constantly, every day, calling in working-class homes and establishing personal relations during their visits. Their influence on the working-class vote is very great, and may very easily turn the scale at an election. This was a formidable factor in any negotiations. It was very definitely in the mind of Lloyd George, as were the potential advantages of inclusion in the State scheme in the mind of those with whom he was dealing. These two factors were indeed the pivotal points of any bargain. There was, however, a certain margin for compromise in the negotiation of the exact terms of the association. Lloyd George of course wanted to make the best terms he could. But his speech was such as might have been appropriately made to a meeting of disinterested philanthropists—though there was rather more obvious wit and banter, and something in his manner and the occasional twinkle of his eye which suggested a mutual understanding of much that was not put into words. He spoke of the noble work with which they were to be associated, congratulated them on their opportunity to give public service, and complimented them on their zeal and ability. He drew a picture of themselves which, they knew well, scarcely corresponded with reality—and knew well that he knew it. They saw through his flattery. But they enjoyed it none the less. He knew what he was doing, and probably got a better arrangement than he could have done in any other way.

There were of course many who were fully conscious of his personal charm, but themselves reacted against it. Lloyd George was Welsh in temperament, upbringing and in method. Typical Englishmen, with a public school training and outlook, were likely to find much in him, apart from the actual policy, which they would greatly dislike. The violence of the hatred he aroused in many of those whose privilege he

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was attacking was often as much due to his personal qualities and his methods as to what he was actually attempting. It was, however, on balance, a great advantage to himself, for the reforming crusade on which he was engaged, to be a Welshman, brought up in Wales. He was exempt from the subtle inhibitions of those who have been brought up in the environment of the English social system. There are some forms of conflict, too, in which it is a handicap to be too much obsessed by Queensberry rules. To a typical Englishman Lloyd George's methods seemed sometimes regrettably indirect and his presentation of the facts of a situation far from meticulously exact.

Often, too, the suspicion would occur that there was some hidden manoeuvre behind the visible conduct of a particular negotiation. I recall an incident at the time when Lloyd George was struggling hard, and very rightly,—under the handicap of the opposition of the baser forces he had largely himself evoked by his speeches at the preceding General Election—to secure a more humane treatment of Germany. There was, in the early months of 1919, starvation on a serious scale in large areas of the country, not indeed, as the myth grew, as the result of a deliberate blockade, but through general shortage and a dislocation of supply arrangements. The immediate need of the moment was to get more food into Germany. I had just come back to Paris from a short mission there, where I had seen the conditions, and I sent a message to Lloyd George to ask if I might call and report. I was told he was closeted with Colonel House, but was asked to come in at once. I found, when I entered, that he was engaged in trying to get immediate American assistance in sending supplies in, so that what I had to report was directly relevant. While we talked a messenger came in with a communication from General Plumer, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Germany, in which he said that he could not maintain the health and discipline of the British Army unless more food could be sent for the German people, for nothing would prevent the British Tommy from giving

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away his rations to the starving women and children he saw about him. The message was extremely well-timed and suitably phrased—perhaps even suspiciously so. It was tempting to speculate whether he had known that message was coming—and coming then. It may be that it was only a happy coincidence—I certainly never had any evidence that it was *moré*. In any case, if the technique was skilful, the purpose was admirable.

With his temperament, and his distinctive technique in negotiation, Lloyd George seemed never quite at ease in dealing with powerful and elaborate organizations, such as Trade Unions or the Civil Service for example, through their established hierarchy and by the orderly methods to which they are accustomed. He preferred a more fluid medium of responsive personalities, on whom, as he knew, he could impress his own. There was at one time some anxiety in the Civil Service as to what he would do to it. The Service has deep-rooted and honourable traditions as to appointments and the kind of service it owes to its successive chiefs. Appointments should be made on the basis of record of service and professional ability, and completely without consideration of either political sympathies or personal relations with Ministers; and the Service owes, and renders, loyal assistance to Ministers of any party in carrying out their policy. It is easy, however, to understand that when Lloyd George was engaged in pushing through a great new social reform, such as the establishment of National Health Insurance—which was politically very controversial and at the same time quite different in scale and character from anything the Service had previously undertaken—he was not quite content with this. Time, too, was of the essence of the problem, for if the Act could not be quickly brought into operation it would probably be wrecked. Loyalty and orderly efficiency were not enough. He needed ardour, and this was scarcely to be expected except in those who not only worked on their task because it was their duty but were fired by personal sympathy with its purpose or loyalty to its author.

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Somewhat similarly, when Lloyd George was Prime Minister in a coalition war Government, he felt that he could not secure sufficient speed and consistency in the execution of policy by the mere transmission of orders to the Departments through their respective chiefs. Yet again, when he went to the Peace Conference in 1919, he was not content to use the Foreign Office and any special organization which they might improvise as his instrument for the peace negotiations. He wanted something more personal, more flexible and more capable of rapid action.

The course which Lloyd George followed in these three cases reflects very accurately both his character and his methods. He was determined in each case to secure an instrument appropriate in his judgement for the task of the moment. He was, however, equally anxious to avoid as far as possible incurring the bitter hostility of the established public services and had no desire to attempt any change which would permanently transform their character. He did not, therefore, as some feared that he would, insist on the intrusion into the Department of new men chosen from outside as having the qualities or the opinions he thought useful for the particular task. Any such course would have united the Civil Service in bitter opposition to him, and, if it had succeeded, would have permanently changed, and perhaps corrupted, its character. He left the Service, and its method of recruitment, untouched. For the Insurance Act he chose for the most important post the greatest of civil servants with the most appropriate professional experience, Sir Robert Morant, though he was neither politically nor personally sympathetic. It is true that Lloyd George brought in from outside men and women who were specially qualified for the particular task, but these were not incorporated into the Civil Service but made members of *ad hoc* Insurance Commissions, with no transferability to other services and no longer tenure than that of the special work for which they were required. He insisted that Morant should have the help of some of the ablest men to be found in the Service, seconded

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from their respective Departments; but these were selected, under the impelling authority of a strong Cabinet committee, by the orthodox Service methods without the least political preference. In the actual allocation to such posts as those of private secretaryships to Ministers there was the customary consideration of personal compatibility, but no more. This method was completely successful in securing him what he wanted; and it did nothing to impair the permanent traditions and standards of the Service; indeed in many ways the Service profited.

So too with his second problem. He provided himself with the instrument he needed to impress himself on foreign policy and to secure rapid and consistent action throughout the Service, not by changing the personnel of the Departments themselves but by setting up a new central secretariat, the 'Garden Suburb', a temporary, not a permanent, organization adjusted to the particular need of the moment. He by-passed much of the permanent Service, but he did not subvert it.

So, too, when he went to Paris. The Foreign Office was there, with Sir Charles Hardinge, its Permanent Secretary. Lloyd George was, however, unwilling to leave it in control, subject only to direction from himself or the Foreign Secretary. He by-passed it with Sir Maurice Hankey's improvised organization. Hankey, not Hardinge, was in fact the pivotal British official at the Conference. The result was, of course, that much of the Foreign Office's special knowledge, and of the trained skill of its officials, was imperfectly used. Mr. Harold Nicolson's *Peacemaking* gives a vivid account of some of the more regrettable consequences.* I sympathize with much of what he says, but I still think that Lloyd George was right to use Hankey's improvised secretariat. With the more orderly and elaborate procedure which a great Department rightly considers to be normally essential, I do not believe it would have been possible to cut through the complexities of the 1919 tangle, and secure the signature of a Treaty with Germany in about six months, or that the Treaty secured would have been a better one.

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Any official trained in a permanent service, and accustomed to the standards on which it rightly insists in its customary work, is naturally very conscious of the defects of any new, and less experienced, organization. I have myself been a civil servant for over a quarter of a century and know what the professional attitude is, and must be. At the same time I have twice had the experience of observing from within, in two countries, here and in America, a peace-time administration in face of the completely different and extremely urgent problems presented by war. An elaborate system slowly built up for a different purpose is cumbrous and not easily and quickly adaptable to a sudden emergency; and to by-pass much of it by an improvised organization is often essential. On the whole the method adopted by Lloyd George in the three cases I have discussed was, I believe, the best for both the immediate task and the long-term interests of the permanent Service. In his administrative methods—as indeed in his policy—while quick and drastic in immediate action, Lloyd George can in retrospect be seen to have been more moderate and cautious in his ultimate purposes than he seemed at the time to those whose interests were directly affected.

There was a hard fibre in Lloyd George which enabled him both to use popularity and to defy it. No man who has risen rapidly from obscurity to great power has ever been less the victim of vanity and social flattery. Coming suddenly into public notice as a young Welsh lawyer entering Parliament, he took the unpopular view about the Boer War. He was not silenced. Then, a few years later, as President of the Board of Trade, he handled with great success some menacing industrial disputes. The country suddenly realized his persuasive skill and magnetism. For a moment he was popular with all those who had most hated him. Every door in London was open to him; the tempting prize, then more glittering and less attainable than it became later, was dangled before the *arriviste*; but in vain. He was not diverted from his purpose for a moment. He proceeded with an agitation

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and a policy which for a decade brought him once more the hatred of the privileged classes. He was hated as Roosevelt was hated in Wall Street—and was as little deflected from his goal. But 'L.G.', unlike Roosevelt, had no background of assured social position to support him.

There is of course another aspect to these qualities. For good or ill alike, he was ruthless in personal relations. He had less personal loyalty to colleagues than Asquith or Winston Churchill. He parted without excessive regrets from those who had, in his view, ceased to serve him well. He showed little mercy to those who were broken in his service (he had, said one who knew him well, a kind of animal repulsion from a sick member of the herd). No Minister, for example, was ever served better than he was by an exceptionally able civil servant, W. J. Braithwaite, during the period in which he was fashioning the National Health Insurance Bill and pushing it through Parliament. Braithwaite was devoted to Lloyd George and to his policy. He had, through personal social work in the East End of London, exceptional knowledge of the conditions which the new scheme must satisfy, and the Friendly Societies through which it must be administered. He worked himself to, and beyond, the limits of human endurance; and signs of serious strain were evident by the time the Bill was through and the new Insurance Commission had to be set up. There was good reason for not appointing him to the principal position, but every reason for recognizing what he had done by an appropriate honour. Those who urged this upon Lloyd George, without success, were impressed with an aspect of his character which was later to find expression in his treatment of his most intimate friend and colleague, C. F. G. Masterman. There were of course cases in which ruthlessness to those who had worked with him was in the public interest; but these two were not among them. He was, too, capable of accepting the credit for achievements which would have been more justly shared with others. In dealing with opponents his wit was wounding and often unforgettable. Such phrases as 'a mind like a

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grasshopper' of Lord Northcliffe, 'standing like a stork by the Lake of Locarno' of Austen Chamberlain, 'he sat on the fence until the iron entered into his soul' of Sir John Simon—and many like them—enriched the anthologies of political invective; but the barbs rankled in the minds of his victims and left lasting enemies.

With a general outlook on ultimate goals that was not easily changeable, he was to an exceptional degree an opportunist in the development of his policy. His approach to a problem, intuitive rather than logical; his presentation of a case, impressionistic rather than photographic, with more truth in the general picture than in inconvenient detail; made him exasperating to the logical and the precise. It was a tragedy too for both countries that, at a most crucial stage of their relations, the leading statesmen in Great Britain and France were as temperamentally antipathetic as he and Poincaré.

But if these were the defects of his qualities, he had also the qualities of his defects. The other aspect of his opportunism in method was his accessibility to the ideas, the special knowledge, the trends of opinion around him. 'The great temptation,' he once said, 'of a man who reaches supreme office is to "cease to listen".' It was a temptation to which he himself never succumbed either in or out of office. There are those—Woodrow Wilson was notably among them—who sustain their strength by detachment from immediate personal influence, who shun contact with strong personalities around them as if to preserve the integrity and independence of their own thought. But Lloyd George both gave and received in ceaseless and intimate talk with men of every age and aptitude. It was a part of—and a medium for—his irresistible personal charm. I recall an evening some twelve years ago when most of the company were young Conservatives of the progressive wing. All were entranced, the more because their own ideas were woven into the fabric of his theme and seemed to enrich it. As we came away they exclaimed with one voice, 'Oh, if *we* had such a leader!' And

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I have seen the same effect on younger men as far on the left of his political position as these were on the right. These same qualities were displayed in the Conference period of the early 1920s, as I noted in a short description at that time. 'Magnetic, eloquent, dominating, persuasive; with gaps in his knowledge, but understanding so much more than he knew; gathering his impressions from those around him as if by invisible antennae; indirect and unexpected in method, but courageous, skilful and inflexible in the pursuit of his main objective, intolerably irritating to the precise, the exact, the official—at every meeting of the Powers at this period *incessu patuit*, he was visibly the greatest personality of all those present.'

These qualities were projected, over twenty years, on a great and enlarging screen of public events.

In his first period he was the Social Reformer. More than any other single man he shaped the course of Britain's new democracy; he paved the way, laid the foundations, fixed the design for what is now the vast and still growing structure of social security. To Asquith perhaps more than to him is due the credit for old age pensions; to Winston Churchill as well as to him the credit for Labour Exchanges and unemployment insurance; Masterman served him well in National Health Insurance. But his was the driving force, his wit and eloquence were the high explosive that blasted obstructions from the path. And how formidable were those obstructions in the now distant days of the 'doctors' strike' and the 'servants' tax' it is not easy to realize in an age grown accustomed to the social objectives of which he was pioneer. None but he at that time could have cleared them. But if a reformer, and a Radical, he was not a revolutionary. For all the violence of his attacks on privilege, for all that was called his demagoguery, for all his opportunism, there was a consistent moderation in his ultimate outlook, which is easier to realize by the standards of 1947 than by those of 1910. He wanted less social inequality, he wanted equality of

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opportunity—but not a dead level. He was a Liberal—a radical Liberal—but neither a socialist, nor in the full sense an egalitarian.

The second period is that of the War Leader. He mobilized the country to its greatest effort—as, again, no one else could then have done. And again it was with a great handicap. Under the different conditions of the second World War it is not easy to appreciate the disadvantage of a Prime Minister who was not Chairman of the Conservative Party, but a Radical. It was a very difficult matter then to make a change in the higher military command. None of those who worked with, or under, him would, I think, question the greatness of his leadership. He had flair, indefatigable energy and resilience—his courage rose to meet disaster and never quailed before it. He had in his Cabinet some great men; some forceful personalities; some difficult colleagues—Balfour, Milner, General Smuts, Mr. Winston Churchill, Carson, both the Chamberlains. But there was no doubt who was Prime Minister. All acknowledged his ascendancy, though some—not the greatest—forgot rather easily afterwards.

In his third period as Peacemaker, he had as a support to his policy, at the end of the war, the strongest Navy, Army and Air Force in the world. He was now, however, handicapped by the new Parliament of 1918, for whose character the electoral appeal he had himself made, in a rare moment of flagging faith, was in part responsible. But for a brief period, after defeat or illness had taken both Wilson and Clemenceau from the scene, he towered above every leader in the world. The culmination, but also the turning-point, of his world leadership was the Conference of Genoa. Another Prime Minister remarked to me, ‘When he rose it was the voice of Europe speaking. He was for the time, visibly to all men, the greatest man in the world.’ When the Conference ended in failure, his international position, too, was doomed. Three great events in the same fatal year combined to destroy his position at home and abroad. The Irish settlement which

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alienated him from the British Conservatives, on whose support he was dependent in Parliament after his split with the Asquithian Liberals; the failure of Genoa with his simultaneous quarrel with the new French Prime Minister, Poincaré; and the tragedy of Smyrna which marked the disastrous conclusion of his Greek policy—came in rapid succession; and he was driven from office, never to return in the period of more than twenty years which still remained to him.

In his last period as an Elder Statesman he showed for the greater part of these two decades the same indefatigable energy and flashes of the old genius. Powerful interventions, but diminishing influence, were his fate; and gradually his personal force and penetrating judgement were less continuous. His earlier and his later life was, indeed, preface and epilogue to the greatness of a score of years, which will leave him beyond cavil and question a pivotal figure in British—and indeed for a time in world—history.

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THE TRAGEDY OF SUCCESS

To rise from an origin both humble and obscure to the highest office in the State; to be a creator and leader of a great new party; to battle for many years against the citadels of privilege and then enter them as victor; in a grave crisis to lead not merely a party, but a national, Government; and for some years to be an outstanding figure not only in national but world affairs—this surely is a record of achieved ambition with scarcely a parallel in the annals of British politics. But at the climax of success to lose the friendships of earlier life; to be a renegade instead of a leader in the eyes of those with whom success was won; to find the captured citadel turning into a gilded prison; then to be conscious of waning powers while still in an office which demands the best; and at last to drift into impotence and open disrespect—this surely is a supreme example of the tragedy of success.

This was Ramsay MacDonald's fate, a fate in which circumstance and personality combined to achieve the destined end.

MacDonald brought to the arena of public life a combination of qualities without equal in any leader of the insurgent party of the Left. Tall and handsome, with a striking presence and a native distinction of manner; a mind enriched from the springs of literature and responsive to creative art; a gift for oratory which at its best was like Gladstone's and was aided like his by a musical and resonant voice; a personal magnetism which attracted intense and emotional loyalty—all

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were his; armoury enough against any foe except the one that lurks in a man's own bosom.

One appetite, one above all, grows always with what should sate it; and increases ever with the years. Enjoy adulation, and receive it in more than ample measure, and if the stomach does not quickly turn it will make a staple food of what should be no more than an occasional sweet. Vanity is of all human weaknesses the most universal and enduring; and in public life the most pervasive and potent of the hidden springs of action. It thrives best on a rich diet and in a soil of a success that is rapid, self-made and dramatic. If eminence and good looks are combined, few indeed can resist. A background and environment of assured position may give protection. Without them a strain is imposed upon human character from which, perhaps happily, all but a very few are exempt. A Balfour may be untouched. A Lloyd George who, without a similar background, is undeflected from his path by all the allurements of great and sudden success is much rarer. MacDonald was not similarly exceptional.

I first met MacDonald in the early days of the great Liberal administration of 1905. He had come, at my invitation, to speak to a small society of young University men at Toynbee Hall. I came back with him on the top of a bus and I followed him for a time to the meetings he addressed. He had an aptitude for oratory in the grand manner, with the long intricate sentences of the Gladstonian tradition—involved but also (at this period) successfully resolved. All the talents and qualities which he was soon to display on a wider scale were already evident to all—including himself. But potential vanity was as yet no more than a useful self-confidence, a spur and encouragement to ambition.

The war issues of a few years later evoked and developed what was individual and strong in his nature. He formed his own policy and, right or wrong, was prepared to stand by it, without regard to popularity or prospects. What he did and showed of himself, while it left him for a few years outside the main current of national life, strengthened both his

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character and probably, a little later, the roots of his public support. Ostracism hardened, it was success that softened—and that not at once.

His political life falls into three chapters and three decades. In 1914 he was a lonely figure protesting against the war. In the preceding ten years he had been helping to build up the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party, incidentally purging the main Socialist movement of its Communist tendencies. Ten years later he was Prime Minister, and was to hold that office, in three administrations alternating with periods of opposition, for half of the next decade.

The first Labour administration of 1924 was no more than a brief trial effort. Its majority was dependent upon alliance with the Liberals under Asquith, and before the year was out the alliance failed and there followed five years of Conservative rule. Short as the time was, however, it was enough to show both MacDonald's qualities and his defects.

In 1924 foreign policy dominated the scene. It was the year in which the Dawes plan was to end the occupation of the Ruhr and, with the loans that followed, to inaugurate a five years' deceptive respite of prosperity and pacification. MacDonald presided over the London Conference which adopted the report. He was an exceptionally good chairman; he had position, imposing presence, a persuasive manner, and experience; and he was not, even at this date, handicapped, as a presiding officer sometimes is, by an uncomfortably meticulous precision of thought. An American observer told me, with admiration, that he had never seen a chairman who was better at 'kissing it over'. He was, however, as a chairman, whether of the Cabinet or an International Conference, rather skilful than strong. He became so practised in the art of finding the middle line of possible agreement that his mind lost something of its earlier directness and consistency. He became more concerned in 'securing agreement than in pursuing a steady purpose. For good or ill he rather helped any body over which he presided to crystallize its collective

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opinion at the moment, or to agree upon an acceptable compromise, than led them to a conclusion formed in his own mind.

In the same year MacDonald paid a brief visit to the Assembly of the League of Nations. It was not a success; and the explanation is not without interest. The Assembly of course consisted of Governmental representatives and expected to be addressed as members of the League Parliament which both determined League policy and committed their respective Governments to it. But it met in a large wooden hall, the 'Salle de Réformation', which was so constructed that the eye of the speaker on the rostrum fell naturally, not upon the delegates below him, but upon the large gallery crowded with the general public opposite on the same level with him. MacDonald instinctively and unconsciously addressed himself to the gallery and not to the floor, as the form and substance of his speech and his manner in delivery showed only too clearly. He was accustomed to great public meetings and was not skilful in sensing the different methods required for another type of audience. His speech at Geneva was consequently that of a platform orator, rather than of a Prime Minister addressing the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of other countries meeting as members of a formal deliberative Assembly. That speech was obviously, to everyone including MacDonald, not successful. The incident is a reminder of the contribution which the actual shape and structure of the House of Commons Chamber has made to its traditions and methods of debate, but the speech has also a more personal interest.

A few weeks later MacDonald made a similar, and more serious, mistake. The withdrawal of Asquith's support led to a General Election. The B.B.C. scrupulously offered the same radio facilities to MacDonald and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Baldwin. MacDonald, who had arranged to address a large public audience at Glasgow, asked that his speech should be broadcast from there. Mr. Baldwin, who understood better the technique of the microphone and the

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character of a radio audience, went to the studio. MacDonald, pacing his Glasgow platform before an audience who could see him and were excited to enthusiasm by his presence, had a local success, but a national disaster. For to the fire-side listeners, serious, attentive, comprehensive of every type of opinion, hearing only a disembodied voice and able to see neither the speaker nor each other, his platform oratory seemed inconsecutive and irresponsible ranting. By contrast the quiet, persuasive voice of Mr. Baldwin seemed that of common sense and sweet reasonableness. The contribution to the electoral result, which was to put a Conservative Government into power for five years, must have been very great. No Prime Minister except Mr. Baldwin has yet learnt how to use the microphone in an election. Lloyd George was always a bad broadcaster. The personality of Neville Chamberlain came through more successfully, but not to his advantage. Mr. Churchill, after careful study of the technique, made superb use of the microphone in his great war speeches—but forgot what he had learnt when it came to the General Election. But Mr. Baldwin was made for the microphone, and it for him.

There were other features of his early experiences of Geneva that were not altogether pleasing to MacDonald. In this period of European history international conferences, and especially those at Geneva, gave Ministers there a stronger limelight than fell upon the domestic activities of Prime Ministers—as Mr. Baldwin was soon to find, but probably without equal resentment, when Austen Chamberlain became a more prominent world figure for five years than himself. Arthur Henderson, who was a prominent figure at Geneva, was the organizer and controller of the party machine, and already a not negligible rival. Jealous by temperament, MacDonald, who doubled the parts of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, convinced himself, and did not conceal his opinion, that foreign policy usually went wrong if he did not handle it himself, and the position of a representative at Geneva was consequently a difficult one. Jealousy and

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distrust led to serious rivalry in the Cabinet, substantially affected foreign policy, and contributed to the causes of the break up of the party seven years later.

And at this moment, mistiming perhaps the pace at which it was practicable for international government to develop, Henderson helped to draft the 'Geneva Protocol' in a form which provided for universal compulsory arbitration and, by 'closing the gap' in the Covenant, greatly increased the obligations as to economic sanctions. MacDonald was, probably rightly, loath to accept such a seriously increased responsibility at that time and without the participation of America, though the formal decision to reject was taken by the Conservative Government which succeeded him. These first experiences of Geneva left memories and associations of ideas which perhaps influenced his general attitude to the League in the second Prime Ministership of five years later.

In this first year of office, however, it was not in international conferences but in his handling of affairs in the House of Commons that MacDonald showed most clearly the characteristics which were later to influence his career. His sensitive pride, his dependence upon the Liberal vote, and the Parliamentary inexperience of some of his own colleagues in his Cabinet, caused an irritation which he did not conceal. The Campbell incident, quite unimportant in itself, became the occasion of the fall of the Government mainly because he gave the impression of a disingenuous evasion of personal responsibility; and the importance of the Russian question at the subsequent election was largely due to his unskilful handling of the Russian loan treaty in Parliament and of the Zinovieff letter. He entered his period of five years of opposition with his relations with some of his principal colleagues somewhat impaired, and the seeds of dissension already sown. Upon this period, however, during the whole of which I was at Geneva, I have nothing to add to what is publicly known.

Mr. Baldwin assumed office with the great advantage, in

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foreign affairs, that the Dawes settlement had just introduced a five year period of prosperity and improved international relations. Austen Chamberlain, with Briand and Stresemann, made full use of the new opportunity. There followed Locarno, the entry of Germany into the League, and the elevation of the League Council to the highest peak of authority it ever reached. But, at home, a disastrous decision to re-stabilize the pound at its old parity, together with certain other misfortunes and mistakes, plunged Great Britain into a coal strike, a general strike, and a domestic depression in a period of world recovery. Unhappily, too, the world recovery itself was based upon excessive, and often ill-advised, foreign lending, which was bound in time to bring a crash. In 1929, when a turn of the political wheel brought MacDonald again into office as head of a Labour Government, the sands were rapidly running out. He inherited a situation in which no Prime Minister, and no British Government, could have averted disaster.

For two years the struggles of the new Government against the impending fate gradually widened the difference of outlook, and increased the personal jealousies, in the leading trio of Labour Ministers, MacDonald, Snowden, Henderson. Snowden, austere and single-purposed, with qualities that won respect rather than a following in his party, wished to arrest the rapidly mounting budget deficit by a reduction in unemployment allowances. He was brought into conflict with Henderson through both this and some of his interventions in foreign affairs through reparations. MacDonald handled some of the principal questions of foreign policy directly, consulting Henderson little, and with increasing distrust and jealousy. There was an increasing divergence between 'Geneva' questions and others. Meantime the financial situation became more critical. The 'May' Committee reported a large deficit which, in their view, could only be met by a serious increase in taxation or drastic reductions in unemployment allowances which it was obvious that the Labour Cabinet would not agree to impose. At some stage MacDonald

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conceived, or was persuaded to accept, the idea of a National Government in which he would be Prime Minister while some of his leading Labour colleagues would be replaced by Conservative and Liberal Ministers. Whether there was something in the nature of a 'conspiracy'; whether the crisis was, by the 'May' Committee, or the method of its publication (without explanation or statement of policy) by the Treasury, both exaggerated and increased, with the political purpose of effecting a change in Government, will doubtless be long disputed. The result was in any case a National Government which, though including MacDonald himself, Snowden, and Thomas, was disowned and opposed by their party.

MacDonald was now in lofty, and lonely, eminence. He had lost the support, the friendship, and in large measure, the respect, of almost all his old friends and associates. He was dependent upon the support of his political opponents. He had henceforth no way back, no alternative. He must be a Prime Minister with Conservative support—or a friendless ex-Minister in retirement. But his new associates had both the political wisdom and the courtesy of their training and traditions. The Government could only do what they wanted, and indeed what the country then needed, if it drew its strength from more than a purely Conservative basis. MacDonald as at least a figure-head was still useful for this purpose, and in order that he might be that they were content that he should be more. If Mr. Baldwin was Mayor of the Palace, MacDonald was for some time much more than a *roi fainéant*. He was active in the international questions of finance, foreign policy and American relations; and he was still at the height of his powers, if not of his power. The future, however, already began to cast its shadow. I recall that shortly before his visit to President Roosevelt in 1933 he asked me to spend a week-end with him at Chequers, alone except for members of his family. In talking of the differences in the American and British systems I remarked inadvertently that if a President ceased to be President he was at once, unlike a British Prime Minister, only a private person,

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not Leader of His Majesty's Opposition. I saw a flash of emotion—'It isn't only in America that the head of a Government may cease to be anything if he ceases to be that'; and I remembered too late his own position.

During his last tenure of office as Prime Minister a very definite deterioration in his personal quality gradually became evident. For this there were several causes. In the first place there was declining health. In a visit to America he had been struck with a sudden and serious illness. His life was saved by the skill of an American doctor, but some of the effects of the illness may have continued. In addition he was troubled with his eyesight and had to undergo more than one operation. There were other contributory causes, however, which were perhaps even more important. For some years he was subject to a bitter-sweet personal and social experience. Severed from old friends and the associations of a life-time, he found attractive consolations at hand. He would have been an acceptable figure at any time, in any society. But he was also Prime Minister, with the prestige, the privileges and even something of the power of his office. Personal attractions would have been enough but political considerations were added to them; the doors of the great were freely open, and the society behind them was a consoling refuge from his lonely eminence. He gladly accepted the hospitality, and with it, insensibly but indubitably, was responsive to the influences with which it was associated. There are few indeed, in his situation, without the aid of either alternative friendships or of social gaucherie, who would have had the toughness of fibre to resist. It was a seductive, corrosive influence.

From the time when MacDonald became Prime Minister in the National Government, he was under an intolerable strain. The country, and indeed the world with it, was visibly drifting to disaster. This responsibility in itself was enough to try a man to the limits of human endurance. But it was the least of the strains to which he was subjected. His former friends regarded him as a renegade and a traitor to the cause in which he had led them. They felt a bitter, and indeed a

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contemptuous, hatred for him which some of them showed brutally and openly. And MacDonald's temperament was such as to make the wounds so inflicted fester and rankle.

Parliamentary life is a life for extroverts. Political leaders who live for many years in the public gaze are rarely introspective. A political rebuff is quickly followed by a public retort; and in conversation and correspondence between themselves they normally express their emotions with a freedom which is much rarer in men whose professional training is in more secluded occupations. Historians who read the correspondence of deceased statesmen are usually surprised at the absence of reserve in the expression of their feelings at each turn of fortune. Their emotions seem to be at once more lively and more transient than those of other men. Quick and overt expression of this kind certainly gives a release and a catharsis. Alternations of fortune, changing personal relations, rebuffs to vanity succeeding pleasing successes, are a part of the rough and tumble of normal political life. Those who succeed best, and last longest, are those who can quickly feel, express and forget the emotions of the day. The toughness of fibre which is always so remarkable in statesmen who maintain their authority into old age has almost always been preserved by a temperament of this kind.

MacDonald, however, was a Scot, half a Highlander and half a Lowlander in parentage. He was Celtic in temperament, as in origin. He had the Celt's sensitive pride; the emotional nature, hidden normally behind a jealously guarded reserve, so surprising in its depth when the reserve is broken. The dignity, the courtesy, which made him so good a host, and so revered a leader of those who followed him unquestioningly, had as their counterpart a jealousy and deep resentment of rebuff and disaffection. He could find no salve for such wounds in the extrovert's quick expression and retort; they penetrated the innermost recesses of his being, and there rankled and festered. No temperament could have been less fitted to withstand the strains that followed his

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alienation from his party. It is no wonder that, from 1931 onwards, he began to succumb.

The loss of his powers was gradual and more visible to others than himself, but its progress was inexorable. In June 1933 he was President of the great International Conference on economic and financial policy. I was out of office then, but, as I had had some experience of the questions that were to be discussed, he invited me to see him each morning and talk over personally and alone the work of the coming day. I did so for a time and, in intimate discussion of this kind, saw him as he could not yet be seen by those whom he met only in large conferences. The stimulus of an important occasion would still rouse him to something of what he had been; the formality of a large conference masked what was moving in his mind. But when he was alone with one he had long known as an official, no special effort, no mask, was necessary; the defences were down. I could see then what was generally realized only some years later. He was already no longer in a mental and physical condition to be capable of the continuous and exacting responsibilities of high office. But he remained Prime Minister for two more fateful years, years in which Hitler showed his hand, in the 'purge' of June 30th, in intensive rearmament, in a scarcely concealed aggressive intention; in which Dolfuss was murdered; in which Mussolini was allowed, without restraint or warning, to embark on his Abyssinian adventure.

By insensible degrees the Prime Minister, if in Downing Street and on occasions of ceremony he still seemed to reign, no longer ruled. The Mayor of the Palace was more powerful; but he was not yet more in evidence, not yet responsible in his power, his influence being still masked both by courtesy and a certain combination of indolence and prudence. When at last the change came, with the replacement of MacDonald by Mr. Baldwin in 1935, the necessity for it was patent to all, and in the final years Parliament and the country saw only too clearly the end of a decline that had in fact begun long before.

The Tragedy of Success

If MacDonald is to be judged for what he really was, the last years of his life must be seen for what they were, and discounted, as years in which illness was slowly killing him. He must be assessed by what he was in the half century of public life which ended in 1933—or perhaps in 1931. It is hard for contemporaries and immediate successors to see the events of a man's life except in a perspective which exaggerates the memories of the latest years. History does something to restore the perspective, but even history can scarcely disregard the last years of a statesman whose personality has continued to be a part of the pattern of great public events. It was MacDonald's cruel destiny, unusual in a country with Parliamentary government, to outlive himself, neither in retirement, nor in the intermittent activity of opposition, but in the office of Prime Minister. The general historian must find these last years a distorting mirror for the man; but the future biographer at least should do his best to correct the distortion.

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

APPEASEMENT

At a certain stage in literature the characters in poetry, drama and fiction are merely personified qualities and not real persons. Similarly in historical biography they are often the mere personification of the quality that seems to be reflected in a great event. Neville Chamberlain will be, and in history on a world scale will be little more than, the Man of Munich. And Munich will for long be the supreme example of a fatal policy of appeasement, and of the weakness and softness of fibre which such a policy seems to reflect. Posterity may thus picture Neville Chamberlain as a weak old man, a civilian with an umbrella confronting the armed and military youth of Germany, shrinking at the prospect, and timidly yielding through lack of resolution and moral toughness. If so, posterity will be grievously mistaken.

Political biography, which infers the character of leading statesmen solely from public events and then presents the events themselves as the projection of the character, distorts history fatally. The fallacy is as great as that of Marxian determinism for which persons are only straws upon a stream of impersonal forces. The truth is of course that what happens in a given crisis is the combined result of the personality of the protagonists and of the environment of forces external to themselves in which they have to act. If either of these two is wrongly assessed, the other also will be misconceived. Munich will never be understood if it is believed to be simply the reflection of weakness of fibre in the British Prime Minister of the time, or indeed, as the following years showed, in the nation of which he was the leader. The truth is more complex.

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Neville Chamberlain was, in fact, among Prime Ministers, more than usually resolute, authoritarian and strong-willed. He acquired a dominance over his Cabinet, and over Parliament, which had been scarcely approached in the interval between Gladstone and Lloyd George. His Ministers were the instruments of his personal policy, his supporters were disciplined with excessive severity. He had indeed defects and limitations which were expressed in his policy of appeasement, but weak irresolution was not among them.

To those who watched him, as I did for several years, from the opposite benches in the House, the main outlines of his personality emerged clearly, in spite of a jealously guarded reserve, alike in his appearance, his manner and his policy. The picture of him as it remains in my memory, and as I recorded it at the time, is of a spare and even ascetic figure; dark hair and dark eyes; a profile rather corvine than aquiline. He carried his seventy years well and looked and seemed less than his age. His voice was harsh, with an occasional rasp, and without music or seductive charm; but it was clear and resonant and a serviceable instrument for his purpose. In debate and exposition his speech was lucid, competent, cogent, never rising to oratory, unadorned with fancy, and rarely touched by perceptible emotion. But it gave a sense of mastery, it reflected the orderly mind behind and, if something was lost, it derived strength from its disregard of all that was not directly relevant to the close-knit argument of his theme.

In manner he was glacial rather than genial. He had neither the spontaneous ease of intercourse of some of his colleagues, nor the *fausse bonhomie* of others. It is, however, significant that most, though not all, of those who worked with him closely, whether as fellow Ministers or officials, had a more favourable impression of his character and temperament than his natural manner gave to those whose relations were less close; and many, indeed, in addition to admiration, felt real affection for him. His manner reflected not only his attitude to those who were outside the limited range of his close associates, but also certain aspects of his character—

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for he had a cold disapproval of mental and moral qualities antipathetic to his own, did not easily forget or forgive an injury, and was less adaptable in personal relations than most of those who had spent their lives in politics. His manner, however, while reflecting, also exaggerated, his true attitude to others, for it was in part, though only in part, due to a certain inner shyness. Sometimes for example he seemed to sneer, or to snub, when he had in fact no corresponding intention or feeling. A nervous interrogator would think he had been rebuffed and only find in Hansard the next day that he had really been given the satisfaction he had sought. His instinctive attitude to a critic, even one who wished to be helpful and constructive, was to resist and overbear, not to conciliate or compromise. An opponent must be opposed; and a supporter showing signs of independence must be disciplined. To a somewhat exceptional extent he regarded unquestioning loyalty, obedience, pliability, as giving better claims to his favours than any signs of personal initiative or judgement. A young man who had the qualities that might later make him a strong member of a Cabinet had little chance of getting his feet on the path that leads to it. He seemed acutely conscious that the trim of his boat of lightweights might be disturbed if a weightier man was added; and he preferred the even running of his craft to the vigour of the individual oar.

Such a catalogue gives little clue to the more human and intimate side of his character. His family affections were strong and enduring. He drew strength from Nature, as Grey did. Like him he found pleasure in fishing, and from boyhood and throughout life he was a student of birds and flowers, and had a sensitive appreciation of natural beauty, which found felicitous expression in his copious and frequent letters to his sisters. He also turned in his leisure to classical music, and was usually to be seen, for example, at Beethoven symphony concerts. He was at the same time widely and well read in both English and French literature. Yet, with all this width of interest and accomplishment, he brought to

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politics none of the rich and humane philosophy which his predecessor, Mr. (now Lord) Baldwin, had evolved from a love of English literature and of nature. The pursuits of Mr. Baldwin's leisure had a closer affinity with the work of his office. He seemed to have a wider range of vision, extending to dim and distant horizons, which may have given a truer perspective to current problems, and may also have destroyed something of their definition and clarity of outline. Neville Chamberlain's interests were more sharply divided, his character more clear-cut, his vision at once narrower and clearer. He had a compartmented mind. Love of nature; of music; of general reading, were separate from each other and from all that concerned public affairs, without fusion or interpenetration. All his mental frontiers were clearly drawn. His political knowledge, experience and principles were precise, orderly, limited, immunized to external influence by self-confidence. He was shy and sensitive. His shyness, however, was not that of diffidence, but of one who jealously guards the integrity of his own inner life and thought. His sensitiveness was that of a man who quickly resents criticism, not of one who is acutely conscious of the existence of what he does not himself clearly comprehend. Within the jealously guarded limits of his own knowledge, experience and meditation, he had a conscious mastery of his material, an unquestionable intellectual integrity, and a concentration of aim and purpose which gave him a natural leadership over those whose knowledge was less exact and whose mental frontiers were less decisive. He seemed to see more clearly what was directly ahead for seeing nothing to right or left.

For any problem within the range of his vision and experience he was thus supremely competent. When he was required, however, to assess a personality or situation outside the range of his habitual mode of thought, what had been his strength became his weakness. External criticism even when friendly and constructive was likely to arouse resentment rather than self-questioning. It only confirmed him in his belief that he had a personal destiny and a personal mission,

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and he proceeded on his course with his will and purpose hardened, rather than weakened, by opposition. He might be broken, but he would not bend; he might be beaten, but he would not compromise.

For most of us his more intimate and personal side was guarded by an impenetrable reserve. Parliamentary life reveals personality better than most forms of human association, but there are substances which even the most powerful rays cannot penetrate. Clear and decisive as were his visible qualities, his inner nature was exceptionally hard to assess. There could, for example, be no doubt of the strength and depth of his desire to save his compatriots and humanity from the sufferings of a great war. But the individual distresses of those who fell by the wayside, in Czechoslovakia, or China, or Spain, did not often visibly touch his emotions. And what he did not feel he never professed to feel. It was indeed always more certain that he genuinely felt an emotion he expressed than that he felt none when he was silent.

Both his personality, and his policy, are better understood after a consideration of his previous record before he became Prime Minister on the verge of seventy. Like his father before him, he had his roots in Birmingham and the Midlands. He was less changed by transplantation than most other Prime Ministers who have been born and bred outside the London area, and succumbed less to the powerful and sometimes enervating influences of the metropolitan environment. He came, again like his father, and unlike his half-brother, comparatively late to Westminster and Whitehall, fortified by a long record of municipal service, which was kept alive by a continuing interest in the affairs of his city and the region of which it is the centre. In his upbringing, in his earlier and moulding experience, and in the whole of his outlook, he was essentially a man of the Midlands, not of London; of the world of business, not that of politics, diplomacy and metropolitan administration.

In the business circles that he knew he had met tough bargainers. He had learnt that bargaining strength as well as

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intrinsic merits will count in a negotiation; but he had found that even the toughest negotiators can be dealt with if you are prepared to allow for the strength of their hand and, if necessary, be a little more than reasonable in what you concede. They might ask too much, but after all there was a limit to what they would demand, and it might be worth while to meet them. And it was a mistake to complicate your deal with irrelevant considerations. You might dislike and disapprove of the man you were dealing with, you might think him unreasonable. But if it was worth while to pay the price, it was better to pay it. That was good business. You would only suffer if you refused through resentment, fear of loss of prestige and a feeling that the other man was getting the better of the bargain. In political affairs there was too much of this attitude. It was time the business methods to which Birmingham was accustomed were given a chance. That perhaps is the outlook from which he surveyed the problem of Hitler—narrow, direct, practical. Mr. Attlee once said of him that he was like a listening set tuned in to Midland and not to National. There was, however, perhaps some benefit, as well as some loss, in the fact that Midland came through with special strength. The trouble was not really with National. It was with more distant stations that communication was more difficult. Geneva was usually out of range. Atmospherics often interrupted the connection with Washington. Moscow rarely evoked more than crackles.

There was, however, a considerable administrative record between his limited experience of business and municipal life in the Midlands, and his responsibilities as Prime Minister. In spite of an unfortunate start as a notably unsuccessful Minister of National Service in Lloyd George's administration, he was afterwards one of the most highly respected Departmental Ministers of his time. The Ministry of Health regarded him as the best Minister assigned to it since its creation; the Treasury as the most competent Chancellor of the Exchequer, within the limits of orthodox policy, since Gladstone. He was an exceptionally good Chairman of committees. He had all

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the qualities that Whitehall most desires for its normal tasks: industry, order, precision, correctitude, decision. He was neither wayward, nor fickle, nor fanciful. He was a lucid expositor, and a competent defender, of Departmental policy.

Neither Neville Chamberlain nor Munich can be properly judged without due account of the Prime Minister he succeeded, and the situation he inherited. Mr. Baldwin had been the most powerful force in the British Cabinet and in Parliament. He was Prime Minister when the German rearmament reached dimensions which clearly necessitated a national effort in response. He shut his eyes to the evidence before him. He procrastinated when the evidence could no longer be ignored. He feared opposition from the electorate, but he neither tested the people's will by a declaration of policy nor attempted to guide them by stating the danger. He left his office with the nation unprepared—unprepared even to prepare. His policy in the face of the nation's gravest danger was one of drift and he gave the public not a tonic but soothing syrup. Neville Chamberlain therefore found, on his accession to office, a confused and dangerous situation. The defences of the country were weak; the armaments of Germany already more powerful and rapidly increasing in strength.

'Appeasement' is often now used in an opprobrious sense which seems to imply that concession is always mere weakness and folly. It is well to remember that if a willingness to concede is under certain conditions a political crime, it is under other and more usual conditions a political virtue. To concede from strength (where there is known to be the power to refuse) is often the rarest and most rewarding political wisdom. Concession and compromise, when the power to enforce is uncertain or shifting, is the normal method of political progress and settlement in both domestic and international affairs. Even to yield to a stronger more than justice would prescribe is sometimes, in the absence of a superior tribunal of settlement, the course of prudence. Only if what is demanded with a show of force goes beyond not only what

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is just but what is tolerable; if it is the inevitable first step to other demands; if the concession will whet rather than assuage the appetite; if the effect of yielding once will be to weaken the power to resist when resistance becomes imperative, is 'appeasement' no longer a virtue but the worst of vices.

These were indeed, as later events showed, the features of Hitler's policy, perhaps inevitable in his régime. Some of the truth was, however, not evident in 1937, though perhaps it should have been, either to Neville Chamberlain or to the majority of his countrymen. Nor was the whole truth more evident to those who controlled policy in France. Nor is it probable, from what can be ascertained of the influential forces in the public opinion of America, that if the American administration had at the same time been faced with a similar problem it would have acted differently—in 1937. Baldwin had failed to stop Mussolini in Abyssinia or Hitler in the Rhineland in 1936, and had done little to rearm. Great Britain and France in 1937 were relatively weaker; the prospect of success in war more doubtful. But was it certain, Chamberlain asked, that the dictators' appetite could not be satisfied by concessions which, though regrettable, might be preferable to the havoc of a great war? Mr. Baldwin would perhaps have drifted to the inevitable disaster without either an effective effort of resistance or a serious attempt at a bargaining settlement at an earlier stage. This was not Chamberlain's way. He thought that personal contact and a conciliatory policy might achieve a tolerable settlement, or at least one preferable to war; and having come to this conclusion he pursued it with undeviating consistency. No disappointments, or humiliations, or attacks from the opposition in the country, or revolt within his own Cabinet, deflected him an inch from his path—until the Ides of March of 1939. It may not have been the right policy, but it was a policy, it was his policy.

No British Prime Minister has ever had such a humiliating experience as Neville Chamberlain in the years in which his

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policy was gradually proving its futility. Having decided to attempt to arrest the fatal sequence of events by direct personal contact, he received reassuring promises. He was, in the first instance, bound to accept them at their face value, and in the face of scepticism in Parliament, to express his belief in them. Little by little events began to justify his critics. To admit that they were right meant revising his whole policy and abandoning all attempts at appeasement. But the original reasons for that policy remained, impaired perhaps but not removed. Must he despair because of certain breaches of agreement which might not be decisive? He had a strong inducement, and perhaps for a time some justification, for continuing his course and for expressing a greater confidence in the sincerity of those with whom he negotiated than perhaps he felt in his heart. But the deceptions increased. The sordid farce of 'non-intervention' in Spain ended in the inevitable tragedy. At what precise time should he have admitted that the agreements were merely a screen behind which the dictator powers were pursuing their purposes without essential modification? Should it have been when the position became intolerable to Mr. Eden, or that later date at which it became intolerable to Mr. Duff Cooper? To change his policy might be to precipitate war at once, and were we yet strong enough for the risk? If then, his admirers might urge, he was right to make his first attempt at appeasement, he was perhaps right to keep alive any chance of a return to the observance of agreements by refraining from any denunciation of the successive breaches.

But the march of events was inexorable. Not Spain but Czechoslovakia, at the heart of Europe, an ally of our ally France, was now involved. He went to Berchtesgaden, he went to Godesberg. He came back, apparently to bring a message only of inevitable and imminent war—war with the country still inadequately armed and London almost defenceless against Goering's bombers. Then came the delusive respite. The scene in which it was announced in the House of Commons on September 28th was the most dramatic that

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has ever been enacted there since the period of the Civil War. As it exhibited both Neville Chamberlain's personal qualities and also something of the national mood at the moment of the Munich crisis, it may be worth while to repeat a description I wrote at the time.

In the familiar setting of the dark-panelled oblong chamber, with the Speaker in his raised niche, the wigged clerks at the table, the brass-bound boxes and the mace before them, the House itself was as it is only seen on rare and great occasions. Behind the Treasury Bench and the Government on the Speaker's right, behind the Front Opposition Bench on his left, and below the gangway, every permitted space on the floor and on the steps was crowded; so too were all the galleries above, with Members who could find no room below, or privileged strangers, Peers, Ambassadors, the Press and some fortunate members of the public. But it was not the numbers but the mood that marked this day from others.

The Commons had adjourned at the end of July till October 31st, unless the Government decided 'to call the House at an earlier date if such a course should appear necessary in the public interest'.

The occasion had come. Throughout the summer the storm had gathered; Lord Runciman mediating between puppets, while their controller bided his moment; the Nuremberg menace; the sudden order; the flight to Berchtesgaden; the enforced surrender on harsh but apparently defined terms; the new ultimatum; the breakdown of Godesberg; the return of the Prime Minister to report to his people and prepare them; the summoning of Parliament for the last Wednesday of September.

We came most of us expecting war, and war at once. As we walked to the House we had seen the feverish digging of trenches in St. James's Park, symbol at once of our danger and our unpreparedness. It was with such events and forebodings that we listened to the Prime Minister. It needed no great orator to conjure up a picture of distant carnage, for us

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to hear the 'angel of Death beating his wings'. The feeblest imagination could catch the whirl and throb of the winged messengers of ruin who in a few hours, nay, even before the day's session was over, might be raining death from the clouds above us. Had the Mother of Parliaments reached the term of her days? Was she to be stricken in her own home? And was her progeny throughout the world to perish with her? We knew not.

Chamberlain rose, a spare, thin figure, visibly fatigued but erect. We saw the familiar mien and gestures; the hands passing nervously over the face, now touching each other, now touching the lapels of his coat, or removing and replacing his glasses; the slight slant of the posture, with its slow swaying motion; the rather stiff movements of the left arm, the deictic gestures of the right. The voice was tired and low and a little harsh, but it was clear and slowly gathered strength. The speech, in its delivery, its phrasing, its orderly sequence, was clear and incisive. The speaker grew with his theme.

For those who were also in the Chamber on 3rd August, 1914 (and I was one, though then in a gallery, not on the floor), the comparison with Sir Edward Grey must have been always in the mind. The nobility of face and presence, the carved and aquiline profile, the deep and resonant voice matching the high tragedy of the theme, were here no more. It was a slighter, older man, deriving from industry and not from the land, who now bore the combined burdens of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. But the resemblances were more striking than the differences. The theme unrolled like the scroll of fate; the argument marched, as in Greek tragedy, to its apparently foredoomed end. Step by step, in 1938 as in 1914, we heard the long sequence of events, all tending towards war; the succession of attempts to arrest them, each in turn frustrated. 'I tried this, and I failed; I tried that, and I failed; I can no more; prepare for the inevitable, steel your hearts, and endure.' That was in substance Grey's theme; and so, for an hour, it was Chamberlain's. But in 1914 the

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tragedy reached its expected climax, with the German ultimatum to Belgium and its rejection—and we passed out to four years of war. In 1938, at the very moment when a similar climax seemed imminent, we had not a climax but a peripeteia—the most startling, surely, in the history of Parliament. A message was passed along the Treasury Bench to the Prime Minister. He read it; the shadow on his face lifted; he read it out. There was to be a third meeting, at Munich. A few moments later, another message arrived; Mussolini would also attend. Germany, Italy and Great Britain would discuss once more whether there was an alternative to war. At the supreme moment the tension was suddenly relieved. Peace now for the day seemed certain; for a period, probable; for our lifetime, not impossible.

It is difficult to recapture, or convey, the mood of the Commons after passing in an hour through the most intense of human emotions, increased for every individual Member because they were shared by five hundred others round him. The House rose and cheered the Prime Minister, it adjourned with a god-speed for his mission from the Leader of the Opposition. For the moment at least we forgot all but the relief. Later reflection, and the criticisms of those not themselves present, brought some self-reproach. But no body of men could have resisted the emotional strain of intense anxiety and sudden relief, such as no Parliament had ever before experienced. It was not, however, beyond human capacity to resist. Mr. Churchill, the historian and descendant of Marlborough, the War Minister of the last war—the Cassandra of recent years, who had vainly foretold the truth to unheeding ears—sat silent in his place below the gangway, with hunched figure and lowering brow, visibly remembering the past and foreboding the future.

But whatever the past or future, the merits or faults of policy, the physical endurance and vigour of the central personality in this scene remain an indelible memory. Members many years his junior, bearing no personal responsibility, felt the emotional strain almost beyond endurance.

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What must it have been for him who had suffered Berchtesgaden and Godesberg and had Munich before him?

He turned to his new task, and neither his will nor his body failed him then or later. Many qualities may be denied him, but not toughness of fibre.

There followed the most humiliating scene in history of British diplomacy in retreat. Czechoslovakia, an ally of our closest associate, France, was mutilated, and soon to be dismembered. The task which the British Prime Minister had set himself was to induce her to abandon a defence in which neither France nor Great Britain was prepared to assist her, and if possible to save something by what was in effect no more than a plea for mercy to the aggressor. The scene was appropriate to this rôle. It was the British Prime Minister who once again, as twice before, had to hurry by aeroplane to the appointed place. It was on German soil that the representative of the ancient British Kingdom met the creator of the new Reich. He came without pomp or retinue, in civilian dress and with his umbrella, and patiently endured the demands and declamations of the Führer, who had the emblems of his military strength about him. The British Minister's power depended upon a majority in a freely elected Parliament whom he must persuade, and upon an electorate who could confirm his mandate or withdraw it. He met one who needed not to persuade, but could command; who wielded a military force which he had himself created, who had in five years brought his country from impotence to a strength which struck terror throughout the world. The British Prime Minister came, saw, and was defeated.

Yet the image then in the mind of Europe, and for long afterwards, was not simply one of an elderly statesman in humiliation. The modest, patient, civilian figure became the symbol of a million frustrated aspirations and repressed ideals. Years of dragooning and drilling had not yet destroyed all that was pacific, all that was liberal, even in the minds of many in Germany itself. They denied it expression—and left

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a vacuum, to be filled by the image of the man with the umbrella. This picture of the civilian working for peace was the projection of frustrated and repressed aspirations more than of Neville Chamberlain's actual personality. It was this *persona*, the picture of him in men's minds, that reminded the people of Europe, the world, and for a time apparently even of Germany, of what they knew in their hearts. If to many Neville Chamberlain seemed the embodiment of the lax and impotent civilian in face of the disciplined soldier, to many others he was the will to Peace, which in spite of remembered humiliations they desired more than triumphs and aggrandisement. The umbrella moved to laughter—but not to laughter only. For the moment it seemed not impossible that some limit might be set to Hitler's aggressive ambitions, and that the symbolic civilian might even at the last moment succeed.

It was a brief illusion. Already when Neville Chamberlain returned to say he had brought 'peace with honour', he found in the mood of his countrymen anger, disbelief, shame—and a hardening will. Throughout the winter the British people waited, prepared themselves. What Chamberlain had in fact brought was not peace, still less honour, but a demonstration that, after Munich, if Hitler moved further, there was indeed no tolerable alternative to war. At a terrible price he had proved the futility of his own policy, and with it achieved the unity of a country in which the doubters could no longer doubt.

Throughout these winter months Neville Chamberlain still clung to his hopes and illusions. For as late as March 9th of the next year there were absurdly optimistic Press appreciations of the international situation which had apparently been inspired from Downing Street—not from the Foreign Office. Six days later *Punch*, thus misled, brought out its cartoon 'The Ides of March, Crisis flying out of the window'. It was the day of Hitler's rape of Czechoslovakia. At last, even in Chamberlain's own mind, his policy of appeasement was killed, on the Ides of March; the events of the following weeks were like the daggers of Caesar's assassins, hacking a corpse from which the life had already departed.

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Disillusioned, and indignant, he turned—on his seventieth birthday—to a new policy, that of gathering a combined resistance to aggression, based on reciprocal commitments. In this task he had one asset, and many handicaps. He had demonstrated that there was no alternative. But the bastion of Czechoslovakia was now lost, years of successive surrender had destroyed faith and hope throughout Europe, and to an extent not yet fully evident sapped the will and morale of France. Neither his record nor his temperament qualified him, now a disillusioned, unsuccessful man of seventy, to attract countries not immediately threatened into a revived system of true collective security. To the menaced and almost defenceless peoples of central and south-eastern Europe the possibility of the ultimate defeat of Hitler paled against the certainty of his immediate success. Chamberlain's own country was still inadequately armed. He had failed, when the chances had been more favourable, to secure the alliance of the one power in Europe which might have turned the scales and stayed Hitler's hand. In Britain he had scarcely the aspect of a war leader, and the public mind began to turn to the statesman who had represented the policy, not of Mr. Baldwin's drift, or of his successor's appeasement, but of resistance, based on national strength and collective union. But Chamberlain pursued his new course with the same undaunted purpose, concentration of energy, and limitation of vision which he had shown in the old. He offered guarantees to Poland, to Roumania, to Greece, though it was evident that, without Russia, these guarantees, at least for the first two countries, could not mean protection against invasion, but only, at best, revenge and restoration. Even the German-Soviet pact of August neither daunted nor deflected him. Nothing indeed could by then have deflected the course of British policy. He could only have given the helm to other hands.

No such idea could occur to him. What he had lacked was not courage but vision and imagination, and this defect was now an actual support to his determination and undiminished

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self-confidence. When the war at last came, he showed the same qualities as before and no others. He was competent, precise, consistent, inflexibly courageous, with industry but without dynamic energy, a skilful Chairman of his Cabinet, not an inspiring national leader, deciding sagaciously the issue immediately presented, neither anticipating nor forestalling the future, a dupe of the 'phoney' period and the Maginot complex. When, at last, Norway was invaded he thought Hitler 'had missed his bus'; when, at last, the country called insistently for their predestined war leader his ears were deaf. To a rebellious Commons he exclaimed, 'Even I have my friends in the House, and we shall see what they think when the vote comes.' The vote came, and at last he was convinced, as he had been about Hitler by the Ides of March. He accepted the situation: then, with the same dignity, courage and patriotism. He remained in his successor's Cabinet and continued to the limit of his physical strength, to work competently, loyally, industriously, on the tasks assigned to him.

This then was the man who controlled Britain's policy through three of the darkest years of her history. He was astonishingly consistent throughout, in all that he did, in his response to every issue that confronted him. He was tough and wiry in mind and body; physically and morally courageous; seeing clearly what was within his range of vision, exceptionally insensitive to what was outside it, with both the strength and the weakness of a concentrated purpose and a limited imagination. He had intellectual integrity, a disciplined and orderly mind and untiring industry. He was precise and punctilious; pertinacious and authoritarian; courteous without geniality; respected and feared but without the magnetism, sympathy and inspiring quality that make the greatest of leaders. This, or something like this, will be the personality to emerge as the misleading *persona* of the Man of Munich fades.

On his career and achievement later history alone can pronounce the final verdict. It was his unhappy fate to have

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his greatest years entirely dominated by the issues of war and peace, for which his experience and his qualities were less appropriate than for domestic reform. If the clouds had lifted before he succeeded to the chief office, he would probably have stood high among British leaders in creative social organization. He had the experience, the tradition, the deep personal interest, and the constructive quality required; and in the 'thirties, after the financial crisis, the political situation was such as to give the responsibility for social progress to a progressive Conservative.

But this was denied to him and it is on his record in war preparation and foreign policy that his place will depend.

The tale of Britain's defensive preparations in the years before the war is a sorry one indeed. All parties, and the country as a whole, must share the blame, though a special responsibility clearly rests upon Mr. Baldwin who failed, when Prime Minister, either to act or to lead or to inform the public. It is fair to remember that, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain then supported a stronger armament policy than his chief; and he inherited a situation in which Great Britain and France no longer had a sufficient collective superiority over Hitler either to restrain him or to ensure victory.

This situation, while clearly a factor in foreign policy, should have at least been an incentive to accelerated defensive preparations. How did Chamberlain meet this test when he himself became Prime Minister? Did he do all that was reasonably practicable? He himself believed that he did, not only at the time, but (characteristically) in retrospect and to the end. The verdict is, I think, likely to be adverse, though I have neither the space (nor indeed, as regards the armed forces, the technical equipment) to discuss a question which is both confused and complex. I am myself inclined to take as a test what was done in civilian preparation, in supply arrangements, in A.R.P., in storage of food and materials. Here I speak with more relevant experience (though for that reason perhaps also less objectively) for I was one of Mr.

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Churchill's supporters in urging the immediate establishment of a Ministry of Supply, and myself initiated an A.R.P. League outside Parliament and organized inside an all-party movement in support of a policy of storage. Here the case was overwhelming in reason, and by the test of the collective opinion of those best qualified by experience to judge. I summarized it fully in *Security* and it is not now necessary to repeat it, the more because it was not denied by the Government. They accepted the policy formally, but failed to execute it adequately. This may indeed be said to be the fault rather of the Ministers to whom the specific responsibility was assigned than of the Prime Minister, whose attention was naturally devoted to other matters. But it is for that very reason more significant of his limitations. He was a strong Departmental Minister; but he neither chose a strong team, nor infused energy into the team which he had chosen. After all, why did he not invite Mr. Churchill to join his Cabinet in 1937 or at least in the period between March and September 1939 when 'appeasement' had ended? Before the Ides of March the answer might well be that such an appointment was inconsistent with his general foreign policy, but that answer does not suffice for the following six months.

The main question, however, that of the general character of his foreign policy, is more difficult. The 'Policy of Munich' of course must be judged not on the events of September 1938 but on the earlier policy of which they were the culmination. There are many who (like myself, as I indicated in an intervention in the House at the time) were in disagreement with the earlier policy but not with his three visits to Germany in that month, in the situation with which he was then confronted, with London defenceless and France wavering.

It is extremely difficult at this moment, with the vivid memories of what has happened in the last seven years, to separate the two questions: 'was Chamberlain right, in the light of our present knowledge?'; and 'was what he did reasonable in the light of the knowledge available to him at the time?' But, as a criterion of his personal quality, it is of

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course the second question which is appropriate. The historian who studies most closely the exact situation at the moment of each decision, and is most careful to exclude from his mind what could only be known later, will probably be the most hesitant in pronouncing a decisive judgement. Whatever the ultimate verdict, it is unlikely to coincide either with the definite but opposed views of 1937 or the almost (though not quite) unanimous approval of October 1938, or the generally adverse opinion of 1947. The historian will without difficulty find at least an explanation, if not a justification, of Chamberlain's policy. It resulted in part from the personal characteristics just described, in part from the hard facts of the situation inherited from his predecessor. He was acutely conscious of the inadequacy of Britain's war preparations, and in particular of the defencelessness of London against air attack. He felt that he must seize whatever chance there might be of averting war, or, if that were impossible, of buying a respite for further preparation. He had written off the League of Nations—as a business man writes off a loss—after it had been allowed to fail in the Abyssinian affair. Mussolini had then successfully defied the Western Powers and both their opposition and their surrender had inclined him towards the orbit of the German dictator. But was this necessarily decisive? There were some grounds for hoping that it was not. Perhaps he could still detach the weaker dictator even if he could not successfully appease the stronger, and if the ally were lost perhaps even Hitler would be more amenable to reason. This, or something like it, must have been his calculation, and it must be judged on what was known at the time and not in the light of subsequent events.

Having chosen his course, Chamberlain followed it without deviation or publicly admitted doubts. He devoted himself to his single purpose, and thrust aside whatever seemed either irrelevant or obstructive. For his main negotiations he was his own Foreign Secretary, Sir Horace Wilson his Foreign Office, and (we may add) Lady (Austen) Chamber-

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lain his Ambassador in Rome. He neither habitually used nor always even informed the nominally responsible Minister and Department. His concentration, in method as in purpose, led him perhaps to take too little account of relations with other European countries, with America, with Russia. His diplomatic technique may be condemned even by many who accept his main policy. But, after all, a Prime Minister has the ultimate responsibility; and, if he is determined, in a situation of great urgency, to impose a policy with which the Foreign Office is not in sympathy, he is almost compelled, in some measure, to choose other instruments.

After the crime of the Ides of March, and the war that followed six months later, we are all conscious of the terrible consequences of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, not only for herself but also for those who had soon to fight without the aid of her army, and with her equipment and munitions factories at the service of their enemy.

'Munich', however, was in any case not the weakness of a moment or a man. It was the climax of a long period of blindness and inadequate preparation, most culpable in the time of Baldwin and starting indeed long before him. It was indeed much more than that. It was a phase of weakness in the life of the democracies of the world—of all the democracies.

Neville Chamberlain himself was in large measure the prisoner of fate. His strength and his weakness both came from concentration of purpose and narrowness of vision. Within the limits of his outlook and his policy he was not weak, but strong. He was a man of one piece, and his policy was of one piece with himself. He was, for all the apparent weakness of 'appeasement', in his own substance a man, not of straw, but of iron—tough, sound and true throughout; inelastic and unimpressionable; not to be molten to another shape by any but the fiercest of fires; not fissionable by any force into dynamic energy.

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Action and achievement are an imperfect mirror of personality. The pressure of necessity, the conscious limits of his own authority, prevent even the most powerful of statesmen—to an extent to which not even he, and still less others, can measure—from expressing his own mind and nature fully in his policy.

Alike to his contemporaries, and to posterity, Mr. Churchill will be the most interesting personality of his age among British statesmen. The later historian, in attempting to analyse, comprehend and portray him, will have first the records of his public achievement and then his speeches and his writing. Of the first he will have an amplitude, if not a plethora. He will find in the second some corrective for the distortions of the mirror of achievement. But he may well be further assisted in his task by notes from contemporaries of the aspects of character and personal quality which have most impressed them, and of illustrative incidents within their knowledge; for these, while sometimes the most revealing, are also the most evanescent. Even the most trivial, in the sense that they were associated with no events worthy of record for their own sake, are sometimes significant of personality.

If I had to mention a single quality which I think the future biographer of Mr. Churchill should be especially careful to display adequately, it is that of 'magnanimity'. If ambition is the last infirmity of noble minds, this surely is their crowning glory. In the government of the world it is at once one of the rarest and in its ultimate consequences the

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most rewarding. History has many instances of opportunities fatally lost through failure to display it at the cardinal moment, and records no less the infinitely rich rewards which have sometimes followed when the opportunity was seized. It is the aspect of his character which Abraham Lincoln, had he survived, would have shown in his policy to the South, after their defeat in the Civil War. The British Government of 1906 showed it in their South African settlement after the Boer War and the victory which they had inherited from the preceding Cabinet. The moment of victory, or of strength so apparent to all concerned that victory could obviously be won, is the only one at which a policy of conciliation and concession can be counted on to bring rewards and not disaster. 'Appeasement' from weakness, though it often invokes the liberal doctrine of conciliation, is in fact rather its opposite; for in essence it is a sop to a Cerberus who is feared, and whose appetite is therefore not assuaged but whetted, not generosity to one who knows that he could not extort it.

Magnanimity, however, if it is broadly conceived, can be seen in personal relations as well as in public policy, in small incidents as well as great events; in the attitude to an older colleague or opponent in misfortune; and not less in the mood in which defeat, disappointment and personal injury are faced. It is a jewel beyond price, of many facets.

Two scenes in the House of Commons, separated by almost half a century, well illustrate this quality. The first is depicted by Mr. Churchill, in his biography of his father, Lord Randolph, in words which reflect his own instinctive response to an example of generous chivalry.

In his Administration of 1880 to 1885, which should have been the climax and given him the harvest of his long career, Gladstone had been dogged by a series of misfortunes. These were relentlessly exploited by the Fourth Party, led by Lord Randolph, whose technique in political opposition was very effective and intensely irritating—nagging, waspish and often venomous. The

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attacks were successful; Gladstone failed in his main purpose and was brought down to impotence and defeat. Scarcely any statesman in British history can have had stronger reason to harbour resentment. Seven years later, in 1892, Gladstone again became Prime Minister, for what must evidently be the last time. He was faced once more by his old opponent. But in the intervening years an obscure nervous disease had struck Lord Randolph, of which the results were painfully obvious, and more obvious to everyone else than to himself. 'The fire and force of his oratory', says Mr. Churchill, 'were gone, never to return: and as the Session [of 1893] drew on, his difficulties of utterance and of memory increased, and the severe and unrelenting labour exhausted the remnants of his strength. Several times he failed to hold the attention of the House and even sometimes to make himself understood. Once indeed the members grew impatient and the House was filled with restless murmurs. . . . In these days it was observed that Mr. Gladstone would always be in his place to pay the greatest attention to his speeches and to reply elaborately to such arguments as he had advanced.'

We need to reconstruct the full scene to appreciate fully the chivalry of this action. Gladstone was now eighty-four. He bore the whole responsibility of a Prime Minister in circumstances of exceptional political difficulty. He had to watch his Home Rule policy, the supreme object of all his later life, being slowly, inexorably destroyed in the House of Commons day after day, night after night. He fought to the end, though he was conscious of losing, with all that remained of his strength. There were formidable opponents to encounter. But Lord Randolph was no longer among them. Many of his own Conservative party, which owed so much to him, left the Chamber when he rose. He need no longer be reckoned with. If there was any time when the Prime Minister could safely leave the Treasury Bench to snatch a little rest and relaxation, it was when his once powerful opponent held the floor. But night after night, through that long, oppressive summer, the 'Grand Old Man'—who had

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never better deserved that title—was there in his place whenever Lord Randolph spoke, with a hand held to his slightly deaf ear, patient, attentive, and unfailingly courteous.

In the next scene, forty-seven years later, Mr. Churchill is the central figure and the occasion as great as himself. France had surrendered, with consequences to Great Britain which no one could better assess than he, and with attendant circumstances of ill-faith and broken pledges which might have excused the extremity of resentment even in a normally generous man. Mr. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons was such as probably no other man living could have made in such circumstances, with a depth of sympathy and a magnanimity which even now, after many years, will be remembered and may help to restore the unity of western Europe.

'The House', he said, 'will have read the historic declaration in which, at the desire of many Frenchmen, and of our own hearts, we have proclaimed our willingness to conclude at the darkest hour in French history a union of common citizenship. However matters may go in France or with the French Government or with another French Government, we in this island and in the British Empire will never lose our sense of comradeship with the French people. If we are now called upon to endure what they have suffered we shall emulate their courage, and if final victory rewards our toils they shall share the gains, aye, and freedom shall be restored to all. We abate nothing of our just demands—Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, all who have joined their causes to our own shall be restored. What General Weygand called the "Battle of France" is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years men will still say "This was their finest hour".'

The stuff of which the future leader of his country was to be made is best revealed in four years of his *Early Life*,

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inimitably told in his own book so entitled. Here can be seen, as in no other book ever written, what colour and romance there could be, at that moment of England's history, for a young man endowed with every advantage of birth, personal quality and supporting friends—including a mother who to further his ends would leave 'no wire unpulled, no stone unturned, no cutlet uncooked'. With the Malakand Field Force, in Cuba, at Omdurman, in the Transvaal, he saw active service, and time after time escaped death by the narrowest of margins. Above all, India—Kipling's India, with the gilt not yet off the gingerbread or even tarnished, with its pageantry and polo, its colour and adventure, and the glittering spectacle of the beneficent rule by a handful of Anglo-Saxons over millions of varied races and religions—made an indelible imprint on his mind. There shines through these years the gay courage which finds stimulus and delight in danger—and in later and more sombre years was to make his mood (and with his inspiration that of the people he led) 'grim and gay'. But if this was in the forefront of the scene there was behind it an untiring industry, and a zest for what was outside the range of the normal polo-playing subaltern. He devoured Gibbon and Macaulay, with a fresh appetite that had not been dulled by school instruction. He himself wrote a book on what he had seen in India which earned the commendation of Lord Salisbury. He followed this with despatches from South Africa as a war correspondent, until he was taken prisoner, by Louis Botha in person. This is surely, in retrospect, one of the most dramatic scenes in all history. The single encounter between two such men seems to bridge all the centuries between the Iliad and the age of modern war. Captor and captive were each, at different periods, to be their country's leader at the greatest crisis of its history. In each were courage, chivalry, magnanimity, and all the other qualities that make greatness, sufficient as the basis of mutual self-respect and a friendship which was to have incalculable results. Had not the young Churchill been separated from his Mauser in the train wreck from which he had just escaped,

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either he or Botha might have been killed; but fate or chance had a different destiny in waiting. He endured for a time a prisoner's fate and in captivity had time and opportunity to reflect on the lot of the less fortunate, whom hitherto he had seen only from afar as pawns on the chess-board.

In these four years, then, there was already everything out of which, under the fashioning of experience and responsibility, the future Churchill was to be made: courage; zest for life and adventure; industry and an unrelaxing will; knowledge at first hand of war; the growing mastery of English out of which he was to forge a mightier weapon than any sword. He came back, to enter political life as Conservative Member for Oldham, and began to be what he has since been throughout his subsequent half-century, a House of Commons man. He was soon to change from the Conservative to the Liberal Party, only to return after many years, as a prodigal at first coldly welcomed, to his original party. But only those to whom consistency is nothing but party loyalty will accuse him of either inconsistency or mere political opportunism. His interests throughout have been the British Empire, national defence, social reform, the kind of personal liberty which in his view is inconsistent with Socialism, and a general outlook which in the early decades of this century expressed itself in the policy of free trade. At every stage he allied himself with those who could best achieve what he desired in each of these spheres. With his background and early experience in India it was inevitable that he should first be a Conservative. It was no less natural that when social reform and free trade occupied the political scene he should join those who under Campbell-Bannerman and Lloyd George were, with skill, energy and success, achieving exactly what he desired against the opposition of those with whom he had previously been allied. It was equally appropriate that when the centre of gravity in the political struggle turned to the issues of private enterprise against Socialism, national defence and the support of the British Empire, he should again join the party traditionally associated with the pursuit of

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these purposes—and be a rebel within it when he thought it faithless to its historic rôle.

Mr. Churchill's part in the Liberal administration of 1905 brought him the experience and responsibility required to develop and mature him. Every man has the defects of his qualities, and defects with his qualities. The other side of Mr. Churchill's ardour and dynamic energy has been impatience and impulsiveness. And the other side of his self-education was for a time a lesser background of actual knowledge than that of some of his colleagues in the first, and exceptionally brilliant, administration in which he served. It used to be said of him at that time that he 'thought in phrases', and that it was very dangerous if the wrong policy happened to become crystallized in his mind in a brilliant epigram. During the whole of this first period there was an ardent boyishness which, attractive as it was, seemed rather incongruous with the responsibilities of great office. The best defence of his personal participation in the Sidney Street affair when he was Home Secretary was perhaps the one he made to a colleague, 'It was such fun'. Each new office was rather like a glittering new toy—the Navy, of course, the most exciting of all. The country, glad to see him in secondary posts, would have been anxious if, for example, he had then held the office of Sir Edward Grey. I once heard Lord Haldane remark, 'So clever, so brilliant; a pity he has never been educated'. But he would not have so spoken twenty years later.

In office Mr. Churchill's zest for adventurous action was harnessed to the massive vehicle of official policy, which at once profited from the dynamic energy he brought and saved it from reckless expression. So too his English style, which, with nothing to restrain it, had tended to become over-ornate with rhetoric, was now married to the habitual phraseology of State documents, saving them from dull jargon and itself beginning to acquire a classic quality. And in the House of Commons the writer became, gradually and with infinite pains, the orator.

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Even in his youth his ardour, imagination, industry and administrative genius, operating within the framework of general policy formed by men of more mature character and calmer temperament—Asquith, Grey, Haldane—brought immense benefit and no off-setting dangers. And in time what remained from youth was the gaiety and ardour which added to the inspiration of his leadership. Life, experience, great responsibility—and history—had taught and matured him. For the rest there was only an impatience and irascibility in issues not grave enough to evoke the whole of himself.

In his offices at the Board of Trade, Home Office and Admiralty, he became a great administrator. And then as First Lord of the Admiralty he was in 1915 discredited and for a time sent into the wilderness on two war issues, on both of which in retrospect it is now seen that he was right—the decision to defend Antwerp (when with a characteristically chivalrous instinct he desired to share the fate of the men he had sent), and the more important decision to attempt the Dardanelles, when more adequate support by his colleagues would have probably brought victory two years sooner.

He was driven from office for three years. He returned as Secretary for War in 1919, was appointed Colonial Secretary in 1921 and, after an intervening period, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924. In the first of these offices he showed his habitual magnanimity to the defeated in the policy he advocated towards Germany. In the second he made a difficult settlement of the Middle East. In the third he made perhaps the chief administrative mistake of his career in authorizing, on the advice of the Bank of England and the Treasury, and against that of Maynard Keynes, the restoration of the pound sterling to its old parity of \$4.86. His last office had been in a Conservative Government, for he had now rejoined his old party. He was, however, an unhappy, suspected, and increasingly rebellious member, both because so much of him was Liberal and because his Conservatism was of an older school. He broke from Mr. Baldwin on the

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question of India. He thus excluded himself from office, with the full prospect that the exclusion would be permanent. There was characteristically never the least compromise or concession in his attitude. He was ready to sacrifice his career, and indeed his life. At the time of a crucial party meeting he was slowly recovering from a dangerous typhoid fever. His doctors advised him it might kill him to attend it; a friend who saw him at the time said he was in a condition which made it seem impossible for him to travel. But he went to make what he knew must be a hopeless protest. For on two questions—and unhappily on two only—the Indian problem and the abdication of Edward VIII—Mr. Baldwin united firmness, industry and political skill. In these two issues it is possible that Mr. Baldwin was right. On the third issue on which the two men were in conflict he was indubitably wrong. Under the National Government of 1931, in which Mr. Baldwin was the most powerful member, and in the succeeding Government in which he held the supreme office, the country was allowed to drift into fatal weakness.

It was in these years in the wilderness that Mr. Churchill began his greatest service to the country and brought his own qualities to their fullest maturity. If the biographer will turn, for his understanding of the Churchill of 1940, first to the few crowded years of youth between 1896 and 1900, he will perhaps next study, not his years of office, but what he did in the long intervening period. He was in fact, with unremitting industry and energy, doing two things. He was urging the necessity of stronger national and Empire defence with the authority of one who had held, and the freedom of one who no longer held, high office; and he was writing, and in doing so learning, history. In writing on the first World War he necessarily reflected on the conclusions to be drawn from it. The work he did in writing the life of his ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, did even more. The roots of his intellectual life were henceforth deeper and stronger; he reached his full maturity. By becoming a historian he crowned and completed his equipment as a statesman. When

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he faced his greatest task he did so, as no other living man could have done—and as he himself could not have done earlier in life—as the embodiment of British history and tradition. He was the essential Englishman—the British ‘Everyman’, in the sense of being what every man then wished to be.

Mr. Churchill’s great decade was, almost to a month, his seventh. On his sixtieth birthday Hitler had been a year in power and, to an eye that could see, had begun to show what his dictatorship would bring. When he reached his seventieth, Hitler was within a few months of final defeat. For the first half of this decade Mr. Churchill was his country’s Cassandra, for the second her Themistocles. But in this great ten years no words of mine can express, and none are now needed to recall, what he was and did, at the full maturity of his powers and with his vigour unabated; and a very brief epilogue will here suffice for recent events, before I turn to personal comments and reminiscences.

In the General Election of 1945 Mr. Churchill was heavily defeated. Hardships and restraints, accepted during the war, and grievances denied their normal political expression, had engendered powerful forces which were now suddenly released. A part of the electorate found some satisfaction for feelings long repressed in voting against those associated with all they had most disliked and now desired to change. The war leaders of the earlier war—Woodrow Wilson, Clemenceau and, a little later, Lloyd George—had experienced a similar popular reaction; and perhaps even the colourful quality of Mr. Churchill’s leadership now made the reaction even stronger. Above all, however, the British public, turning their attention quickly from war to the problems of peace, sent to the new Parliament a majority pledged to the domestic policy of the rival party’s programme. If they could have simultaneously expressed their gratitude to the man without whom they might have lost the chance of any kind of tolerable future, they would doubtless have done so. They did

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their best in the reception they gave him during his election tour of the country. If many who then acclaimed him with tumultuous enthusiasm voted against him immediately afterwards, it was not so much through fickleness or ingratitude, as because they felt that the purpose of an election is to determine the future, not to recognize the past; and a ballot box allows no more to be said of a candidate than a plain 'yes' or 'no'.

In the Victory service at St. Paul's, however, and the other ceremonies at which victory was celebrated, the new Prime Minister was in the place of honour. Mr. Attlee lost a great opportunity. He might have written to the King to say that the new Government, like the nation as a whole, recognized who had been the architect of victory, and begged that, in every ceremony to celebrate it, His Majesty would invite Mr. Churchill to take the place he would have occupied if he had still been Prime Minister. He could thus have struck a chord which would have found a response throughout the country, in his own supporters as well as others. I believe that, in a similar situation—if, for example, he and not Lloyd George had become Prime Minister on the eve of victory in the first great war—Mr. Churchill would have so acted. But the combination of generosity and imagination required for magnanimity of this kind is rare indeed.

In the recorded events of Mr. Churchill's life it is what is greatest in him that is most evident. But the figure that thus emerges is like that of a statue raised too high for close scrutiny. The impressions of near observers, and the aid of incidents in which some facet of character or temperament is suddenly revealed, are needed to give light and shade, and the detail upon which individuality so largely depends.

The first incident which I will record is quite a minor one. I was in the Oxford Union when Mr. Churchill came down for a debate on South Africa as Colonial Under Secretary in the Campbell-Bannerman Administration, at the time of the great decision to offer self-government. One vivid picture

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remains. Challenged on some point in an order or despatch, he held up his right arm and in a gay, boyish triumph exclaimed, 'It was this hand that signed it'.

When Mr. Churchill in 1911 became First Lord of the Admiralty I was, for a few overlapping months, a junior clerk in a minor branch, and though in too humble a position to meet him personally, was able to see in occasional glimpses the effect of an inspiring Minister on a great cumbrous organization. There was no corner of the Admiralty into which the pervading influence of his creative imagination did not penetrate. Methodically he saw in turn the head of every department and branch, asked him to describe what he was doing, questioned him as to why. For the right kind of Minister this is an invaluable technique. The mere effort of having to give a clear account of himself shakes an official out of his routine and teaches him more about his own job than in most cases he will otherwise learn in years of daily work. In any case the stimulus to efficiency throughout the Admiralty was remarkable. Quite apart from all questions of major policy, Mr. Churchill was at this time, in my view, the greatest Departmental Minister under whom it has ever been my privilege to work.

A little later, when private secretary to the Minister in charge of National Health Insurance (C. F. G. Masterman), I had once or twice the chance of watching the art of the orator. Mr. Churchill, as a Minister in the same Government, though another office, sometimes spoke on insurance. I had to write the brief. It was instructive to see the amended copy, the way in which a phrase here, a striking analogy there, a brilliant passage and an apt anecdote, would transform a pedestrian memorandum, of which perhaps in actual number of words three-quarters of the original draft remained, into a notable speech—vivid and convincing.

In the first World War, I had an occasional glimpse of Mr. Churchill from another official angle. I was Director of Ship Requisitioning and had the task of allotting merchant ships to all the many Government services that required

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them. As shipping became the principal bottle-neck of the whole war effort, allocation necessarily meant not merely the technical selection of the most suitable vessel, but decisions on the relative priority of the many services dependent on sea transport. The shipping organization thus became the pivot of the whole supply machinery of the Government—and later of the Allies; and, while general policy was of course prescribed by higher authorities, a considerable measure of responsibility necessarily remained with the officer making the day-to-day allocations of particular ships. I found myself therefore attending most of the committees through which supply policy was formed. For some time the principal of these was a Ministerial Committee presided over by Sir Austen Chamberlain. I recall a typical example of the impact of the old and new type of Minister. As the war organization developed, the competition for shipping tended to become simplified into a balancing of the claims of munitions (with all the raw materials their manufacture required) and of food. Mr. Churchill was the Minister for the first. Rhondda—shrewd and successful in business, able and skilful in administration, but inarticulate in debate and exposition—was Minister for the second. A familiar scene was re-enacted. Munitions and Food each demanded a certain programme; the shipping prospects, considerably less than the combined total, were explained. Who should give way? Mr. Churchill put the case for the full munitions demand with his customary persuasive eloquence. Rhondda, in reply, simply repeated his original request. A long pause and then from Mr. Churchill, at the end of the table, 'Are we expected, Mr. Chairman, to rest content with this bare statement unsupported by any form of reasoned argument?'

Hubert Llewellyn Smith, one of the greatest civil servants of his time, once encountered him on the same committee. He appeared, one day in 1918, on behalf of the Board of Trade, to secure approval for a proposed bill to ensure that the majority of the share capital of any company registered as a British Company should be in the hands of British

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shareholders. No Minister of any other Department was very directly interested, and it looked as if the proposal would go through without dissent or discussion. Mr. Churchill's general free-trade outlook, which twelve years before had been a principal factor in bringing him from the Conservative to the Liberal Party, was, however, still strong. At the last moment he said he would like to put a few questions. First he asked whether the proposal was recommended for its value in war or in peace. Sir Hubert replied, 'Particularly in war'. 'It is now', said Mr. Churchill, 'the fourth year of the war: a little late, isn't it, for the Board of Trade to come forward with a proposal for which they claim such value in war?' Sir Hubert could only admit this. 'Well,' said Mr. Churchill, 'let's pass that point. At least we have had the experience of nearly four years of war to test any claims. In all this period, Sir Hubert, can you point to any instance in which this proposal, if it had been in force, would have been of practical benefit?' Sir Hubert was nonplussed for a moment. If he could think of no answer to such an obviously relevant question he was clearly beaten. Then he had an inspiration. 'I think the case of monazite sand illustrates my case exactly. The lack of this material was a serious handicap to our manufacture of optical glass, as you will doubtless remember, Mr. Churchill, since you were concerned as Minister of Munitions.' 'I recall the circumstances exactly,' said Mr. Churchill with ominous calm. 'Pray proceed with your argument, Sir Hubert.' 'Well, Mr. Churchill, you may recall that we found that the company owning the main supplies of the sand, though a British company, had a controlling majority of its capital in foreign hands.' 'Yes, I am well aware of that; proceed with your argument, Sir Hubert.' 'Well, that practically completes it,' said Sir Hubert. 'Here was a nominally British company, controlled in fact by foreign capital, owning a raw material which we sorely needed for war purposes and were unable to obtain. Had my proposed legislation been in force, the controlling capital would have been British. That is my case.' 'But have you completed it, Sir Hubert? Can you tell

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us whether or not our access to the sand was impeded by the intervening forces of the enemy?' 'Well . . . yes . . . I believe that is so.' 'And which do you think, Sir Hubert, was the real barrier between us and the sand, the financial structure of the company or the physical force of the enemy?' There was nothing more to be said, and Sir Hubert left sadly.

I recall another example of a similarly devastating *coup de grâce*. Sir John Beale, Chairman of the Wheat Executive (which controlled the allocation of wheat and other grain for the Allies), called on me one day to ask for an extra allocation of tonnage to import maize to feed the extra pigs bred in England under the stimulus of a recent Government scheme. I replied that there were no ships available except by withdrawal from other more essential services, especially that of importing raw materials for munitions manufacture. Shipping, not overseas food supplies, was the limiting factor; it was obviously necessary to import whatever gave the best food value per unit of shipping space; and it took less shipping to import a given quantity of ham or bacon than to import the maize for enough pigs to give an equal quantity. 'But that would make nonsense of the whole Government scheme for extra pig-breeding.' 'I can't help that: it's better to end a mistake than continue it.' The argument continued without result, till at last I made a suggestion which was accepted. I said, 'The two great claimants for ships are food and munitions; if you get your maize ships they will have to come out of the munitions programme. My duty is obviously to allot ships in accordance with whatever may be the policy of the Government. Let us see Mr. Churchill, the Minister of Munitions. I will put the shipping alternatives quite objectively. If he agrees, I will allot the ships; if he does not, you can ask your Minister to go to the Cabinet.' So we went to Mr. Churchill. He was then working in a room at the corner of Northumberland Avenue, with a huge world globe beside his desk and graphs and statistical tables of munitions programmes round the walls. As agreed, I put the alternatives.

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Beale stated his case for the pig-breeding scheme. Mr. Churchill sat at his desk, silent, attentive, with a lowering brow. When we had finished he rose, and began to walk round the room. 'Gentlemen, I will tell you where we now are with this war.' In one vivid phrase after the other, pointing now to some portion of the globe and now to a graph of munitions output on the wall, he described the terrific preparations for the final assault on the enemy in the expected campaign of 1919. They were to culminate in an irresistible blow for which every obtainable implement and supply of war was needed. He concluded with an overwhelming peroration—then swung on his heel towards Beale with the final word, 'And now you come and talk to me about pig-food!' Beale rose sadly and took his hat and his leave: that was the end of his extra maize ships.

For many years after the first war my own work, in Paris, Geneva and Oxford, involved no personal contact with Mr. Churchill. Between 1919 and 1937 I have only a few recollections, trivial but significant, of casual meetings. He came down to Oxford once to unveil a plaque to T. E. Lawrence at his old school. The company was small and of no particular distinction. It was characteristic that Mr. Churchill (to whom the qualities that Lawrence possessed had a special appeal) should have come down with an exquisitely written tribute as fine in its phrasing as anything he ever wrote. I recall too a conversation afterwards at All Souls. He said that it was F. E. Smith who had first quoted to him Virgil's 'parcere subjectis et debellare superbos', which then and always seemed to him to be the very core of political wisdom (as indeed every crucial issue in his career abundantly shows). This was the period in which Lloyd George was in something of an eclipse. Not only the public but many of his colleagues in the war (but not Balfour or Mr. Churchill) seemed to have forgotten what manner of man he was and what he had been in the years of our peril. Someone made a slighting or disparaging remark. Mr. Churchill fell on him at once. 'You don't know the man of whom you're speaking.' Never in all

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the long period of Lloyd George's eclipse after the Conference of Genoa did I hear Mr. Churchill refer to him except in the tone of one who was proud to have served under him.

This was the time in which Mr. Churchill, after long regarding the League of Nations (with its disarmament projects only too likely to weaken most those it was most important should be strong) with a kind of doubting indifference, was beginning to realize its possibilities as a powerful instrument of collective preparation against the growing German menace. I had recently left the service of the League myself after ten years in Geneva, and found it of particular interest to observe the cautious development of his attitude. A little later I heard him describe at a lunch meeting his conception of what the League might be as the nucleus of an alliance of free peoples against German aggression, and I had the privilege of drawing one of the best of his impromptu retorts. I remarked that the success of a collective system of course depended on the balance sheet of the potential opposing forces showing an adequate margin on the credit side; and I couldn't make my sum come out satisfactorily unless Russia was on the right side of the account. How did Russia figure in his calculations? Everyone of course remembered his earlier attitude to Russia, and his more recent reticence, and wondered what his reply would be. It was instantaneous. 'If I were about to be engaged in mortal combat with a man-eating tiger, and at the decisive moment saw that a crocodile was ready to bite off the tiger's tail, I should welcome the presence of the crocodile, even though I had previously had no particular affection for it—and even though I might perhaps feel no particular affection for it when it was all over.' It was a precise description of his attitude at the time, which had evolved much since 1919, was to evolve further by 1941, and further still by 1947!

Early in 1937 I became a Member of Parliament for Oxford University and saw from within the House something of Mr. Churchill's great struggle, with every handicap from left and right, for more adequate preparation. He pressed for

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both an increase in the armed forces and the improvement of the civilian organization, in particular by the immediate creation of a Ministry of Supply. On this I had some relevant experience and, as opportunity offered, spoke in support, while myself initiating a complementary movement to secure a war stock of food and raw materials; but I was not in any close personal association and have nothing to relate at this time which is not public knowledge. When war at last came Mr. Churchill once more became First Lord of the Admiralty. As I went to the Ministry of Shipping (as Parliamentary Secretary), I had occasional glimpses of him as I had had in the earlier war, when the department handling merchant shipping was a branch of the Admiralty. I had the luck, for example, to be dining with him and two or three others on the day of the *Graf Spee* battle. (I recalled that in the earlier war we had both been, though not together, at a production of Hardy's *Dynasts* when a message was brought to him that the German Fleet had ventured across the North Sea and was bombarding Hartlepool.) It is at such a time that Mr. Churchill reveals most clearly the depth of his sympathy with a gallant fight—above all perhaps at sea. In my memories I set it by the side of that later, and sadder, occasion when I was next to him at dinner at the Embassy in Washington on the day on which the completely unexpected news of the fall of Tobruk had arrived. The sudden and complete surrender seemed incredible. Every few minutes during the dinner General Ismay was sent out for the latest news—had not at least a remnant cut their way out? The evening was spent in an inquisition with the Chiefs of the Services who had come with him to Washington; but that is a scene which, even now, must not be recounted.

When Mr. Churchill became Prime Minister in May 1940 he kept me in my position at the Ministry of Shipping, and in the following March, when it seemed possible that the whole of our war effort might founder on a shortage of shipping, he sent me to Washington—the only source from which help could come—as head of the British Shipping Mission.

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The mandate was given to me after lunch at Chequers—and I was then shown a characteristic summary of the situation which he had drafted, under the arresting phrase, then new though since so famous, the 'Battle of the Atlantic'. The task in Washington was anxious and difficult, but made possible by what Prime Minister and President shared in their sense of the sea and all that sea communications meant. Before I left, a week after Chequers, I lunched with Mr. Churchill again, at Downing Street: as I turned to go, he stopped me, took down a Clough and read me the lines—

*And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright!*

A few weeks later, after a Sunday lunch at a friend's log-cabin outside Washington, I listened to the great broadcast from London which found its climax and peroration in these lines.

In the next three years I saw Mr. Churchill when he came to America, and when I returned for consultation each summer. No one perhaps in England can realize as vividly as every Englishman in Washington did, the almost miraculous felicity of everything he said during the period when America's attitude was still uncertain—but obviously destined to be decisive. I heard his broadcast a few hours after Hitler's attack on Russia in the company of Mr. C. D. Howe, the Canadian Minister of Munitions, at Ottawa; the next day I saw the Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, and congratulated him on his own declaration. He laughed and said, 'Well, I had written something: but I turned on my radio to hear Churchill and then tore up what I'd written and wrote what you've read.' A few days later I was able to see something of the effect of this same broadcast in Washington. It was a moment of great danger; public opinion was puzzled and uncertain; it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the value of this instantaneous and decisive lead, before

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opinion had crystallized. So it was too when he spoke directly to America. When he addressed the two Houses of Congress, the hospitable informality of the Senate's traditions enabled me to hear him from a Senator's seat—and the effect was overwhelming. It became a continent-wide habit to listen whenever Mr. Churchill was on the air, whether from London or in America. (I was at a Massachusetts degree ceremony a few days after one of his speeches. I amused myself by asking everyone I met if he, or she, had heard the speech. I found no one who had not done so.) And what he was in public speeches he was also in the great strategic conferences after America's entry.

After I had myself left his Government, in which I had served as a junior Minister for three years, criticisms in the House gave me a chance to express there a little of the admiration I felt for what seemed to me his almost infallible judgement in great issues, and his promptitude in executive action. 'I would like to ask the critics', I said, 'what remains, in the light of events, of their criticisms? Perhaps they may say, not altogether without reason, that there have sometimes been impulsive interventions; and that sometimes personal likes and dislikes have marred or impeded policy. But if we turn to the great issues and the great occasions . . . if we recall the great decisions and the great speeches made at those times, is it not true that we see in the Prime Minister a kind of obstinate and unfailing magnanimity—and a faculty of instantaneous decision? Looking back on all those great occasions, was he not, in fact, right?

'He has been the most active architect of Allied unity. The oldest of the three, he has been the most mobile. When the President could not be there, he was there with the Marshal; when the Marshal could not be there, he was there with the President; when both were there, he was there too.'

The public climax of Mr. Churchill's career was perhaps on VE Day. But, for those who were present, not the least revealing memory is that of the tea-party which he gave soon

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afterwards to his colleagues of the Coalition Government who were about to be ranged on opposite sides in the electoral conflict. His speech was gay, witty, both friendly and forceful, with sudden revealing flashes of deep feeling and emotion—the speech of the happy warrior, ready for a hard-fought fray without fear or rancour. There were lapses to a narrower temper in the weeks that followed. But, though the election result must have been a sharp surprise after the public acclamations of his triumphal tour, he quickly recovered his poise and balance. I saw him immediately afterwards, with my colleagues in the Government whose fate had just been sealed. Nothing could have been better than the mood and temper in which he referred to the result. He was both candid and generous. They wanted, he said in effect, to say ‘thank you’; but they also thought the Labour Party would give them more of what they wanted in domestic policy. There must, he believed, be a long period of steady, able, understanding but unremitting Opposition before they could be convinced that they were mistaken. He faced the prospect with courageous public spirit, clearly determined to take his part in the long and arduous fight against odds before him.

No one could have rendered a better service to a new House, in which most were new to its traditions, than he did in the first days after it met. In his courtesy to his opponents (including especially the youngest, when they made their maiden speeches); in the tone and temper of his first important speeches; in the respect he showed to Parliamentary procedure and conventions; he was a visible incarnation of the best traditions of the House of Commons and a living example to those who were now entering it. The effect upon those who thus saw him for the first time was profound. (‘Don’t let anyone tell me that this is not a great man,’ said one young Labour member.) And his speeches on all major issues, as on Egypt and Palestine, for example, displayed all his great qualities.

As the weeks went on, however, this first impression on his younger opponents was not fully maintained. They began to

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show a greater resistance to an influence they felt to be dangerous to their party loyalty; and some of the interchanges at Question time between the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House contributed to this result. Mr. Churchill's magnanimity on all great occasions has never precluded a tendency to irascibility on lesser ones; and these minor interchanges (even when he scored a point for the moment, as he sometimes, but not invariably, did) reduced him to a lower plane and diminished his authority as the greatest of Elder Statesmen. If he would reserve himself for the greater occasions, leaving the small change of daily debate to his younger colleagues, and devoting the time so saved to the history that he alone can write, it would perhaps be better both for the present and for posterity. I once heard someone, before the result was known, ask G. M. Trevelyan what he thought about the General Election. 'I am not a politician,' he replied, 'but speaking as a historian, it will be a tragedy if Mr. Churchill does not have the leisure to write. For he is a great historian.' He is indeed more than that. For he is perhaps unique in being a historian both of great events in which he has been a protagonist and of an age other than his own.

It is not easy for one who has served under Mr. Churchill—even in the humbler outskirts of his realm—to keep what he thinks and feels about him this side idolatry. It must be for later writers to attempt a balanced appraisal of the greatest and richest personality of our time and country. The contemporary colleague can only contribute his few scraps of reminiscence and anecdote to the inexhaustible mine of evidence on which the historian will draw. There is perhaps no great man in history whose '*persona*' will be so vivid, convincing and authentic for later ages. There are the dramatic, revealing, incidents: the 'gate-crashing' into Omdurman; the single-handed capture by Botha; the mobilization of the Fleet in the summer of 1914; the gallant adventure of Antwerp; the tragic, strategic wisdom of the Dardanelles, defeated by the errors of others; and how many more.

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There are, more revealing than anything which other great men of action have written, the books he has written; the life of his father, reflecting so much of the author's own personality; the *Early Life* of the young, privileged younger son of a great family to whom India and the British Empire was a glittering field of adventure; his successive war books, more vivid and eloquent than any protagonist has ever written. Long may it be before the time of final appraisal comes; and may the historian then have to draw upon a second series of war volumes covering the period of his greatest triumph and greatest service to mankind.

BRYCE

A GREAT VICTORIAN

If I had to choose a single typical representative of the Victorian age I should name one who is not usually among those first thought of for this purpose—James Bryce. For the versatility and vitality, for the long maturity of industrious achievement, which are so characteristic of that great age, he had surely no equal.

Bryce was born in the second year of Victoria's reign; and died, half-way through George V's, at the age of eighty-four. For sixty years his work showed neither immaturity at one end nor failing powers at the other. It is told, whether with truth or not I cannot say, that A. J. Balfour, who was temperamentally unsympathetic to his personality, after once hearing him speak, caustically remarked to a friend that he seemed to be suffering from premature senility. Thirty years or more later, by a curious chance the same friend happened to be in Balfour's company when Bryce was again speaking. The friend turned to Balfour and said, 'I think you owe an apology. It is over thirty years since you said Bryce was suffering from premature senility.' 'I will amend my comment,' said Balfour; 'he is suffering from protracted senility.'

The truth is, however, that, though he was not at his best in his public speeches, his *Holy Roman Empire*, written at the age of twenty-five, was already a mature work, of great power and insight, as learned as it was brilliant; and that when he presided over the conference on the House of Lords at the age of eighty the creative quality of his youth was still at the service of his colleagues.

Bryce

If Bryce had been only a historian he would have been in the first rank of his profession, as his Arnold Prize Essay of 1863, the *Holy Roman Empire*, the only prize essay perhaps that has ever become a classic, clearly shows.

If he had never been anything besides a Regius Professor of Civil Law, as he was for over twenty years, he would have been among the best-remembered lawyers of his day: for nothing has been written that is more illuminating on the meeting-place of law, history and politics than his studies in jurisprudence.

If his fame rested only on his travels, and his books about them, it would still have been high. Indeed if there were only the legends of his feats in walking and climbing, in which emulation was then so keen, he would be admired by an age whose physical enterprise so rarely survives youth or early middle age. (I was at a summer conference at Williamstown in August of 1924, when the heat was so great in the afternoons that young and old were content to enjoy siestas. Bryce had been there a few Augusts before when he was nearly eighty. After lecturing in the morning his first care was to ask what hills he could climb in the afternoon.)

If Bryce had done nothing but write his great books on the constitutions of the U.S.A. and of other modern democracies, he would still have to his credit the almost unique feat of becoming the classic authority, which neither national nor foreign writers could rival for generations.

His Ambassadorship to the United States—where the Ambassador needs to speak to the American people and not just to the State Department—is almost unique in diplomatic history.

In his middle life he was the acknowledged authority in Great Britain on all Eastern European questions; in his later life he was one of those who contributed most to advancing the idea of a League of Nations. And—to take the least of his claims to fame—even his purely political career, which included an Irish Secretaryship, the Presidency of the Board of Trade and educational reforms of the first importance both

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in Great Britain and Ireland, would have given him an honourable place in history.

Was ever a career at once so versatile, so long, so rich in achievement of the first rank?

But I write now to recount the impressions and memories of a single afternoon, the only occasion—though I had often seen him before—when I had an opportunity of a direct and intimate talk. I drove over, with some friends, to lunch with him in his country house one winter day when he was eighty-three years of age. Our host came out to greet us; a slight fragile figure; with a grey beard and a moustache yellowed near the lips as if stained by tobacco. He was, however, active and wiry, with an astonishing animation in his piercing eye, his vivid gestures, his voluble speech and his insatiably curious mind. I had been living in Paris and he at once wanted the latest news as to the grouping of political parties there—on which he had an intimate and up-to-date knowledge himself. After lunch he and I went out for a country walk. It was a wintry day, but he had no coat: he enquired anxiously whether I should be cold, but scoffed at the idea that he would be, though he was more than twice my age; and he set out at a pace which I had difficulty in matching. I drew him on to describing some of the greater events in which he had taken part. He pictured them vividly, and there was one peculiar feature about his descriptions which I have never known, in the same degree, in the accounts given of great events by those who have themselves taken a substantial part in them. His perspective was impersonal—it was that of the reporter or the historian, not of the participant; the personal deflection, the almost invariable, if unconscious, tendency to stress the narrator's own rôle or present the scene from his own angle of vision, was entirely absent.

When we returned to his study, I asked him what he was working at. 'Oh,' he said, 'I'm just finishing another little travel book. After that I'm going to start on a Life of

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Justinian.' I perhaps failed to conceal an expression of some surprise, for the latter project seemed indeed ambitious for a man of eighty-three. He caught my expression and said, 'Yes, when I wrote my little book on the Holy Roman Empire, I became extremely interested in Justinian. I resolved then that I would write the standard life. But with one thing and another I've been so busy these last sixty years or so [it was in fact fifty-eight years] that I've never had time to get at it.' His *Justinian* was not in fact written. He died the next year. He had been writing till late at night. He went out to gaze at the heavens—it was a night of bright moonlight—before retiring to his bed. He passed away, without illness or premonition, in his sleep that night. Such are the immortal in spirit: such were the greatest of the Victorians.

HALDANE

THE CAPACIOUS INTELLECT

Lord Haldane is perhaps the best example in British politics of a capacious intellect, unaided by the special qualities which usually give success to a politician. His career illustrates no less the fortune and the fate which in public life attend incongruous eminence.

In Campbell-Bannerman's Cabinet of 1905, the most able and brilliant in British history, his was the most capacious mind. No other Minister was his equal in range of learning, at once detailed and profound. His interests and his knowledge extended over the diverse fields of philosophy, law, military affairs, the British Empire and social reform. Campbell-Bannerman excelled him in shrewdness of political insight; Asquith in authority and classic precision; Lloyd George in dynamic imagination; Grey in an intuitive understanding of the fundamentals of British foreign policy; Churchill in brilliance; Augustine Birrell in wit and humour; others like McKenna and Runciman in specialized aptitudes and experience. But none combined the organized equipment of his mind with its range and depth. He was a learned man, in a sense and to a degree which no one in this Cabinet, or perhaps in any other, has ever been.

He was in many respects an unusual figure in British politics. Like A. J. Balfour he was, after an early disappointment, a bachelor to the end of his life, and also a philosopher—and bachelors and philosophers are both rare among British statesmen. But Balfour, though interested in philosophy, had the characteristically British approach to it of the brilliant amateur. Haldane's was the approach of a learned

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German. Like Lloyd George he was interested in social reform, but unlike him his method was that of an orderly planner of the State's action. He was essentially a planner—before the days of planners—whether he was dealing with economic organization, or the administration of the army, or the reform of the civil service. Moreover, he was not content to bring learning and reason and the planning mind to the problems of the day; he institutionalized them in a General Staff. All these qualities of mind left a slightly un-English impression. It was because he gave this impression that a casual remark he once made, in speaking of his philosophical outlook, 'Germany is my spiritual home', was in later years, at a crucial moment of his career, to be recalled with such deadly effect.

Great as is the injustice involved in quotations out of context, and in this case it was serious and was very injurious to the public interest, there is usually something in the character of the person quoted which gives them an adhesive quality. Asquith's 'wait and see' was, in its context, merely a reasonable retort to an inopportune question, implying nothing in itself of procrastination or indecision. But it is true that Asquith preferred to wait till an issue was presented to him before giving his judgement, and was disinclined to look for trouble beforehand. There is something to be said for such an attitude when a Prime Minister is occupied in the regulatory control of affairs in normal peace time; and when Asquith gave his judgement it was sure and authoritative. But in war it is above all necessary to foresee and forestall. The country turned instinctively to the questing imagination of Lloyd George, and felt that what was inadequate for the new situation in his predecessor was not inaptly expressed (even though it was not evidenced) in his phrase. So too when Neville Chamberlain spoke of Hitler 'missing the bus' in the invasion of Norway, he was not merely making a mistake about that particular military situation but he was illustrating a certain complacent limitation of vision which was characteristic of him. Had Churchill used such a phrase at

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that moment (as he might have done) it would not have stood to him as it will to Chamberlain. This is not 'justice' in the sense of the Courts, but there is an element of justice in it.

In manner and appearance, too, there was something slightly incongruous in Haldane as a member of a British Cabinet. A round and smooth face, without features for the cartoonist; the figure of one who lived well; a lucid, fluent, copious manner of speech, without incisive wit, or imaginative phrase; expository argument, buttressed by learning but unadorned by fancy; a travelling equipment of books, papers and despatch cases; a disinclination to suffer fools, or to be unlearned, gladly—all proclaimed the complete antithesis of the brilliant amateur.

What he achieved in the eight years before the first war showed what sheer intellect, with industry and great learning, could do in a field where other qualifications more commonly lead to success. Asquith, Grey and he formed a small group of Liberal Imperialists who, after some hesitation and difficult negotiations, joined the Campbell-Bannerman administration of 1905 and profoundly influenced the course of its policy. At the War Office he did more than any Minister before him since Cardwell had done to reform the British Army, establishing the General Staff, organizing the Territorials, and preparing with faultless efficiency the Expeditionary Force. When his task of preparation was done he became Lord Chancellor and in that capacity was still a member of the Government when the war broke out. For he was then rudely thrust into retirement. The public had subconsciously felt a certain incongruity with the traditional British outlook and mental attitude. Now, in a moment of national feeling and danger—and with the prospective enemy Germany—they were made vividly aware of that incongruity by his political and Press opponents, who ruthlessly exploited his 'spiritual home in Germany' against the man who more than any other, had equipped the country to meet the German menace and, more perhaps than any other, was

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knowing well both the injustice, and the public loss involved, was under a greater pressure than he could withstand.

Haldane retired to his house in Queen Anne's Gate; but former colleagues and subordinates not infrequently came there for still valued, if now surreptitious, consultation. For no Minister who had ever directed the Service had ever won so rich a measure of admiration and respect. Several years after his retirement, a number of Egyptians were tried before a British Military Court for conspiring to murder British officers. An English barrister was briefed for the defence by a firm of solicitors in which a friend of mine was a partner. He came back to report that he was convinced that one of his clients, who had been condemned to death, had been wrongly convicted. Time was short. My friend appealed to Haldane, who at once telephoned to the War Office. This message was an 'Open Sesame' and my friend was able, in little more time than he took to walk from Haldane's house in Queen Anne's Gate to the War Office, to tell his tale to the highest authorities. No one probably but Haldane, at a time when delay might have been fatal, could have cleared the way so quickly through the successive barriers. The man was saved.

Haldane was not, as his opponents suggested, softened, but stiffened, by what he knew of Germany; and what there was of affinity between his and the German mind helped him to counter its menace. He would try accommodation, but he was not deceived when accommodation gradually became impossible. He went, at the Prime Minister's wish, to see the Kaiser when the danger was already evident but the issue still uncertain. He was an acceptable envoy, and the erratic Kaiser was at the time in a friendly and expansive mood. The High Command was instructed to furnish freely the technical information Haldane desired. I heard him later recount what followed with much humour and considerable satisfaction. 'The Generals,' he said, 'greatly disliked being ordered to give me this information, not so much because I was an Englishman, but because I was a civilian and their

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professional pride was affronted by having to give military information to a layman. It was like them to show their resentment, and equally like them to do it very clumsily.' The conversation was led to the subject of the great names in German military history—Clausewitz, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau. 'Would that we still had with us the great Clausewitz who died' (I cannot vouch for the details of their invention) 'in 1830 of heart failure.' It was an unskilfully baited trap for so learned a victim as Haldane, for he at once replied, 'Indeed he would be of great value to you, but surely he died of cholera in 1831.' The conversation was then hastily turned to Kant's philosophy, 'but that,' said Haldane, 'was an even more unfortunate choice as I had just been finishing a book on the subject.' A little crestfallen, the Generals returned to the unwelcome business of the hour.

In an age when the microphone had not yet come and platform oratory was one of the main assets in politics, Haldane had none of the customary qualifications or adventitious aids. His voice was neither sonorous, nor resonant, nor musical. He had no play of fancy, happy talent for phrasing, incisive and pungent wit (or the facile facetious banter which sometimes takes its place), no personal magnetism or instinctive affinity with the mood of his audience; he had no anecdotes; no aptitude for personal characterization or vivid imagery. He told his tale simply, developed his argument lucidly, appealed to reason, not emotion, whatever his audience. But no one heard him without retaining an impression of greatness.

I myself heard him speak in public only three times, but though over thirty years have now elapsed the theme and the argument of each remain indelible in my memory. The first speech was in some ways the most remarkable. In the middle of Joseph Chamberlain's tariff campaign, now over forty years ago, he came to advocate free trade before a large popular audience in the Town Hall at Oxford. His speech was a lecture in economics, exact in reasoning, cogent in argument, unrelieved and unadorned, suitable for an academic

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class-room. Lucid as it was I cannot think that more than a small fraction of his listeners can have really understood it. But the compliment implied in such a speech was welcomed; its intellectual quality instinctively realized. It had a compelling quality which kept his audience listening in rapt attention for an hour. The second occasion was in 1912. He was the spokesman entrusted with the task of explaining to the House of Lords why the Government had decided to bring the National Health Insurance Scheme into operation at an earlier rather than the later of the alternative dates provided in the Act. The Act and the issues involved were exceptionally complex and intricate. Some half a dozen of us who had been working daily on the new scheme for many months came to hear how one who had no such experience would present the case. I believe there was no one of us who did not come away with the feeling that we had learnt from him—that he had seen both the wood and the trees, while we had seen only the trees. The third occasion was an address he gave at the School of Economics when he spoke of the purpose and principles of a General Staff. On such a subject, and to an audience well qualified to appreciate him, it is less remarkable that he left an impression which all of us who survive still retain among our treasured memories.

After his enforced and unfortunate retirement in the war, Haldane returned to the suitable task of directing the reconstruction planning of the post-war years. The result was a treasury of good counsel which has unhappily been used more by the political student than the practical statesman. The description of the public services, the analysis of their respective functions, the proposals for reorganization, are—an ex-civil servant and professor of political institutions may perhaps be allowed to assert—a classic example of good teamwork ably guided by a chairman of great ability, experience and wisdom. The chief vice of recent administration has been the proliferation of time-wasting departmental committees—an automatic measure of an obsolete differentiation of functions. Much time and energy would have been saved if

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the reorganization he proposed had been carried through. Something indeed has resulted, but there have been few among Ministers, except Milner (long out of the picture) who have had Haldane's type of orderly, planning, administrative mind. Nearly every Minister is so intent upon using the instrument at his hand for an immediate purpose, that he will do little, except by tampering and trivial adjustment, to improve it.

It is strange that one of the Liberal Imperialist trio, the right wing of the middle party, should in his last period have joined the party of the Left. But in that period the issue of public control with planned control had become paramount, and he was attracted to the party that was now the pioneer in putting into practice so much that he had always believed in. For him, as for Mr. Churchill—though it led him into the opposite camp—consistency meant loyalty to his purposes more than to a party.

His early decade of office, however, from 1905 to 1914, was his greatest period. In a Cabinet of all the talents, every other Minister, for all the diversity of quality and temperament, was recognizably within the catholic fold of the English tradition. Haldane was from the first, and throughout, in each of his many spheres of interest, at once eminent and slightly alien. For a decade he infused into an English administration some of the qualities in which all such administrations are deficient. His rise, his fall, his return; his achievement and the loss of his services when they were most required, were all due to what was different in Haldane. The English are exceptionally tolerant and absorptive of what is different from themselves, but they have a way at moments of excitement and crisis of reacting suddenly, with a kind of herd instinct, against what is felt to be somewhat alien or incongruous. They profited greatly for ten years from the first of these characteristics; they suffered no less in the next four years from the second.

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APOSTLE OF A WORLD SOCIETY

The obituary leader on H. G. Wells in the *New York Times* concluded with the statement that he was the greatest public teacher of our time. This is an arresting, and to some may seem an extravagant, statement. I believe, however, that a sober review of the changes that have taken place during the first half of the twentieth century in the opinions, interests and outlook of the public of the Western world, intellectual, ethical, social and political, will confirm its accuracy. Above all, those who were entering manhood when H. G. Wells was in early middle life, and reflect what Wells has contributed to the environment in which they have since lived, will agree that it is no exaggeration. There have been other great public teachers in this time, but none has so consistently and persuasively taught and exhorted so wide a range of readers. Wells was more than a public teacher, but he was that above all, and in his influence upon two generations none equalled him. No epitaph of a single sentence could be so just and appropriate.

His early youth already gave promise of a place in literature, but not of the one he ultimately attained. The son of a professional cricketer, he was apprenticed as a draper's assistant. The books in which he reflected the experiences of his adolescence, *Kipps* and *The Wheels of Chance*, are among the greatest English novels of their kind. As a social delineator he was as vivid as Dickens and more accurate. He had the same intense sympathy with the unfortunate and the underprivileged. Nor was the comic spirit lacking. *Bealby* and *The History of Mr. Polly* will stand comparison with the best of

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Dickens and in the interval between the two novelists there was perhaps nothing in their own kind to equal them.

Wells, however, was soon to escape his draper's shop. He won a scholarship to South Kensington and what he learned there, and at the feet of such men as T. H. Huxley, opened a new avenue. In imaginative prevision of the future of scientific discovery he has perhaps never been equalled by any writer of his own or any other age. While they were still only remote scientific possibilities, he foresaw, and described, the consequences to human life and society of new methods of warfare—the radio, the aeroplane, the tank, even atomic energy—not invariably of course, but most often, with uncanny accuracy. The examples are too numerous and too well-known to recite. I will only mention one of the least familiar. In a short story written before the first World War, he describes the conflict of two forms of society, one chivalrous, horse-riding, aristocratic, the other a product of the mechanical age. The second prevails by the use of a 'land cruiser'. It is a precise description, even to the revolving 'track', of the later tank. It seemed, indeed, in the first World War, when tanks made their appearance, that he had exaggerated the actual dimensions, but even in this respect he had only anticipated the weapon of the second, instead of the first, mechanized war.

But every path he took converged gradually to one broad road on which he was soon to travel for the rest of his days. He became obsessed with the thought that scientific invention was putting into the hands of mankind the power which, with suitable direction, could make an ordered society with a life of happiness and varied richness of activity for all—or without that direction bring universal ruin. The need of the time was to adapt government and organized society to the new power and means of communication, to the new economic and political needs of the scientific age. The framework of society, within and beyond the range of political government, was still that of the horse-and-buggy stage of transport, the pre-invention stage of industry. Adaptation

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was hopelessly outpaced by modern scientific discovery; and it was retarded by obsolete ideas, loyalties and prejudices which only education, at every stage from school to adult politics, could remove and replace. He therefore devoted himself to the task of educating the public, and to this task he subordinated every other purpose in life, with unrelaxing energy, for half a century.

No one will understand Wells, or his place in history, who does not place this dominant and enduring passion in the place it merits. We may, if we will, regret that the genius apparent in his earlier novels was never further developed, that each later novel became more of a tract and less an addition to literature. It was a purposed sacrifice. We may, if we will, regret some of the circumstances of his personal life, and all that took him outside the inner circles of those in places of eminence and influence. But we shall be mistaken if we think that any of the incidents of his private life was allowed to deflect him from his central purpose. A woman who knew him well, and whose own life was impeccable by the strictest standards, once remarked to me that there was at least this advantage in his open defiance and derision of the conventions of his time, that he was saved from the seductive influence of the society he wished to transform, to which others had in varying degree succumbed.

The man who, still in the thirties, devoted himself to this lifelong purpose, had not at first sight, if silent and in repose, a presence to attract attention. He had a short figure, inclining to rotundity, but strong and compact; small hands and feet; a face without striking features; light brown hair and moustache, both rather untidy; grey eyes dreaming, meditative and withdrawn. He was neat and agile in his movements, and in middle life played games, often of his own invention, with an impatient ardour. His voice was weak and inadequate for the platform, where it would rise into a squeak and be drowned in a cascade of words under imperfect control. His talk, however, when intimate or in a small circle, had all the qualities of his writing. It was persuasive and

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vivid, lit often by a sudden phrase which, like lightning, was both revealing and deadly; and even more than in the published word he would delight to shock the respectable, *épater le bourgeois*. He was irresistibly attractive, especially to the young who had more in them than had yet received recognition. He would with them be friendly, equal, intimate, responsive, willing to listen, insatiably curious for any new idea, or specialist knowledge or experience, wherever he could find it. He cared nothing, less than nothing indeed, for eminence and reputation; and it was always for the pomposity and presumption that eminence encourages that he reserved his most deadly shafts. His fertile and restless imagination, aided by a rich store of knowledge that had been gathered by incredible industry and had been neatly stored and arranged in his orderly mind, made him always interesting and indeed fascinating.

Such, in physical presence, was the man who prepared, in early middle life, to attack the society he knew, and the ideas on which it was founded, in order to clear the way to the new society of which he dreamed. His armoury was rich in the weapons of both allurement and offence; descriptive power; scientific imagination; great knowledge and industry; and an unequalled genius for the blasting phrase. His words were daggers, with something on the point to make the wound rankle and fester beyond the healing salve of time. What was lacking was an aptitude for public speech and the temperament and qualities required for organization and corporate action. He was impatient and irascible, and while he could inspire others he could not continuously lead them and collaborate. He could more easily kill by ridicule than conciliate; he would often shock the wavering follower into opposition; and while persistent and pertinacious in pursuit of his ultimate purpose, he was in the detail of his methods and policy incurably impatient. He was aware of what he lacked. He knew that he must be the prophet rather than the practical pioneer of the new world. He could educate and impel, but could not himself organize, command or direct.

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Conscious of these qualities and these defects, he chose a method of work which reveals clearly his mind and his character.

If men were to create a new world they must have a picture of what it could be, and see clearly the evils of the one in which they lived. They must see the inadequacy of the type of man who now ruled them, and understand the scientific outlook and training of the type required. He therefore devoted all his gifts of scientific imagination, and caustic phrase, to contrasting the new and the old in a series of books—books which retained the form of novels but increasingly became political pamphlets rather than works of art.

A background of relevant knowledge was also necessary for all intelligent men. Historians, scientists, all the recognized experts, were the prisoners of their own specialization. They had ceased to be educated in the full sense; still less could they educate others. He must do his best to fill the vacuum himself, and with incredible industry he embarked on his great trilogy, the *Outline of History*, the *Science of Life* and *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*. In these he described in broad outline the course of man's evolution throughout the ages; the physical basis of all life; the framework of economic and social organization. It is easy for a myopic and microscopic specialist to find flaws and omissions. But no one else in our time has made any comparable contribution to general education. If he had done nothing else, this great trilogy alone would have justified his title to be the greatest public teacher of our time.

But the harvest must be reaped as well as sown. For this, institutions, statesmen, organizers must be found. All the time that he was sowing he was also looking for a reaper; and his search is both tragic and revealing. Time after time we see the same phases in the recurrent cycle of his questing mind, hope, disillusionment, bitter enmity. The first phase would be one of ardent hope and he would idealize like a new lover; in the second he would discover how far the object of

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his desires and devotion fell short of his romantic picture; in the third he would turn with all the fury of the disillusioned lover and attack what he had idealized. Nothing was so fatal in the end to an institution or a person as to be at first too generously assessed and praised.

For a time he thought that the Fabian Society, in the great days in which the Webbs, G. B. Shaw and Olivier were ruling it, might carry the Ark of the Covenant to the promised land. He joined the Executive; he wrote one of the most brilliant Fabian pamphlets; he tried to transform the Society into an adequate instrument of the revolution he desired—for the 'inevitability of gradualness' was little in accord with his impatient ardour. Having failed to convert, he turned and rent; he was the greatest disruptive force the Society has ever had in its midst; and his cartoon of the Webbs in *The New Machiavelli* reflects only too clearly the personal emotions involved.

His ardent imagination was then fired by the idea of what the Universities, and the general system of education, might do for his cause. He found some individual teachers who encouraged his hopes. He idealized and exhorted; and again, soon disillusioned, he turned upon them more savagely than any modern critic. Only Sanderson of Oundle escaped, perhaps with the aid of a premature death, from the general castigation.

In the winter of 1936 I invited him to stay for a few days at All Souls. His visit was followed a few months later by his little-known, but illuminating, pamphlet, *The Camford Visitation*, in which a Voice from another world comments upon the learning and educational methods of the two leading English Universities. The opening scene is at 'Holy Innocents', which is obviously suggested by All Souls. He courteously added a note to remove any suspicion that the characters in his tale were in any way suggested by those he met during his visit. They were obviously not. They were types of the academic person as he had observed him in many manifestations in many Universities. These types were

mercilessly caricatured. But, again, the bitterness of his portrayal of the imperfections of Oxford and Cambridge obviously comes from his sense of what they might have been—might still perhaps be. 'If mankind fails,' says the Voice, 'it will be through the weakness of its schools, the obstinacy, the wilful obstruction of its universities. You—and your sister institutions throughout the world—have monopolized the best of the youth of each generation. Can you change the spirit of this place? This old, this weakly lovely place? There is no salvation for races that will not save themselves. Half the stars in the sky are the burning rubbish of worlds that might have been.' This was the last word of the Voice to Camford, and of the frustrated and now despairing prophet of education.

Yet again, when he wrote his *Outline of History*, he realized what the mediaeval Church had done to unite Christendom. He dreamed of a reformed and universal Church, purged of abuses and outworn creeds, which might be the instrument of unity for all mankind. This hope too was extinguished—with the usual consequence.

Once more he dreamed of an élite class, the Samurai; he thought there were possibilities in the British aristocracy. These were embodied for a time in the person of Arthur Balfour; but it was not long before he had become 'that damned Madonna lily'. He was attracted by the dynamic energy and imagination of Winston Churchill—and it was through supporting him when he stood as a Liberal against Joynson-Hicks that Wells had his first dramatic quarrel with the Fabian Society. The idol was once more thrown from its pedestal into the mud. 'He (Churchill) believes quite naïvely that he belongs to a peculiarly gifted and privileged class of beings to whom the lives and affairs of common men are given over, the raw materials of brilliant careers. His imagination is obsessed by dreams of exploits and a career. Before all things he desires a dramatic world with villains—and a hero.'

If the older leaders failed, what of the new? The characteristic figure of the modern world is the Captain of Industry.

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What might not be done by one of these, with the diabolic energy, the toughness, the resources of wealth and great organization at his command, if he turned to a nobler ambition? Wells' imagination played round such contemporary figures as Sir Alfred Mond and (apparently) Lord Beaverbrook. There was indeed little limit to the strength of his idealizing faculty in the first phase of the recurrent cycle. But in time this illusion too was lost.

Other examples might be added, including notably his attitude at different stages to the League of Nations. But what matters is not so much the details of each example but what was common to them all, and what this illustrates in Wells. We see in each of these experiences his ardent idealism, his faculty of discerning the latent potentialities of men and institutions, of investing them with qualities they never possessed; the bitterness of his successive disillusionments; and through all a consistent, dominant and unchanging central passion and purpose.

In this recurrent sequence of despair and illusion, as he turned from one to another of the possible instruments of world emancipation, there is one period which merits a rather fuller comment. In the years which followed the first World War he became increasingly impatient, as indeed did G. B. Shaw, not only of politicians but of the political process of the democracies. It was in this period that he began to meditate on the possibility of creative-minded industrialists and financiers achieving a world unity which elected national statesmen would not even attempt. 'It is within the power of the bankers of the world now to forbid the growth or even the maintenance of armaments; and this is even more true of the big industrial organizations. No soldier in existence can stand against the general will of the chemists and metallurgists of the earth.' The national state was founded on the idea of war; and those trained in the traditions of such a state would never escape sufficiently from them to found a world state. But financiers and great industrialists were accustomed to think in terms of a world, not a country, in terms of

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an economic organization independent of national boundaries. They could, if they would, build up a system in which frontiers would be irrelevant and invisible. This would be the real world state. Political governments would shrivel into secondary authorities like municipalities. They would be replaced, for all that was most important in the world, by a non-political directorate which would be based ultimately on the possession of the levers of financial and industrial power, not upon the ballot.

In pursuing this line of thought Wells was, I think, through impatience and disillusionment, reflecting a widespread fallacy which has been responsible for immeasurable evil in modern history. Hegel had conceived a time when the State would 'wither away'; the same conception reappears in Marxist philosophy. A society can indeed be imagined in which the order which government exists to ensure is so dispersed among men's social and economic activities, and so firmly rooted in man's habits of thought, that political government becomes unimportant and invisible. But that is the climax of a perfected state, not an alternative to it. The system of political power as we know it may be captured; it may be either debased or reformed; it may be entrenched more securely in the popular will or it may be cut from its popular roots; but it cannot be ignored or short-circuited. All action of public importance depends upon either the possession of power or the support or assent of those who possess it. So long as the political authorities command the national armed force, they can direct or prohibit policy and action as they wish. To imagine that industrialists and financiers can organize and control the world is to assume either that they will be allowed to do so by the political authorities who hold the power or that they will seize that power themselves. If, for example, they organize a world steel cartel, what will happen if the national governments (who direct the Customs and have the police and army to support them), make it illegal? Whatever the answer it is unlikely to be one which will give a free and durable society.

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The fact is that there is no real alternative to a sound political government, which is adapted to changing conditions, and responds to popular desires and needs. Government is not the substance of civilization but it is its foundation. It is doubtless better in the end to be a creative artist or engineer than a politician. But if a political system is dangerously weak and incompetent, the most urgent and important thing in the world is to reform and reinvigorate it. Art and music and literature are finer fruits of a civilized society than scavenging and plumbing; but epidemics may destroy the first if sanitation is dangerously inadequate.

Democracy has brought many disillusionments. Many of its processes are sordid, its leaders corrupt. It is tempting, but disastrous, for the ablest and most constructive men in a country to despise and ignore the politician—as so many did in America in the interval between the Civil and the first World War. It is tempting to play with the idea of an authoritarian short-cut, as many did—not only in Germany and Italy—but the result is Nazism or Fascism. It is tempting, when the creation of a world political government seems so difficult, to imagine that separate functional bodies—a Bank, an organization to deal with transport or economics or finance—will add up to a total of all that is needed; but if there is no political heart there will be no life in the limbs. In a period of quiescent danger, Gierke's theory of dispersed authority without central sovereignty may have a delusive attraction. The dictatorships and wars of our time, and the demonstration they have afforded of the State's power for evil, should be a sufficient comment upon these dangerous fallacies. The imperfections of political government can be cured only by reform, and not by replacement. The dangers of national sovereignty may be overcome by its expansion into a true system of world government. There is no short cut.

Wells lost his illusions about creative industrialists as an alternative to statesmen, and later also about creative air-men, whom for a time he conceived as a possible benevolent

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world directorate. He was soon to learn what kind of men self-appointed dictators are likely to be. But his faith in popularly elected rulers was not restored. He failed to find in any existing organization, or body of men, an instrument ready at hand for the task he had in mind. At last the search ended. There was nothing that could be used. He must create. He embarked on *The Open Conspiracy*, by which he hoped through proliferating cells of converts to found a kind of new militant church, with a broad and simple creed. This too, and the faith in common humanity which it presumed, failed in its turn, and his later years were bitter and unhappy. He felt that his followers were falling from him, and a new generation was becoming indifferent. In what he had succeeded his success was so complete that the results were taken for granted. But in the greater revolution at which he now aimed the progress was lamentably slow and he was increasingly conscious that the time was short. Man's environment, under the impact of scientific discovery, was changing with terrifying rapidity; his adaptation to it, in political and social organization, lagged hopelessly behind. The battle was lost, the battle not only of Western civilization, but of *homo sapiens* himself. His last work, *Mind at the End of its Tether*, is one of the most tragic of human documents. It displays nakedly both the despair and, under the despair, the disintegration of a great mind.

My own personal acquaintance with Wells, for a time developing into intimacy, extended over about a quarter of a century, and a few anecdotes and incidents may perhaps illustrate some of the characteristics which I have tried to describe in general outline. I was a member of the Fabian Society when Wells joined the Executive, and I was present when his action in supporting Mr. Churchill's candidature as a Liberal was criticized. The Fabian Society was, of course, Socialist in its creed, and the Liberal party from its point of view was a capitalist party. Sidney Webb made a skilful and convincing defence of Wells' action. He explained

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that the Executive was not a Cabinet, whose members were required to subordinate their personal initiative and judgment to a collective decision on tactics and methods. Having said this, he added, very mildly, a regret that Wells had not mentioned his intention beforehand to a few of his principal friends on the Executive. At this Wells at once rose and left the platform. Webb shrugged his shoulders, remarked, 'We all know our Wells,' and proceeded successfully to his proposal that the question should be dropped. But the Society had not done with Wells, and was never again quite the same after the campaign upon which he then embarked to convert it into a more militant organization.

A little later I was to benefit from the quality in Wells which made him so irresistibly attractive to the young and unknown in whom he found anything that interested him. He sought me out and encouraged me to talk freely and intimately. I recall one occasion when he invited me to dine with him and his wife and the other guests were Shaw, Rutherford, Ray Lankester, Arnold Bennett, and Lord Buckmaster. I was a civil servant, unknown to any of his guests. I went in an expectant mood which was a little dashed when I found the conversation first turning entirely upon royalties and publishing contracts; but what followed was on a very different plane, and I remain grateful to this day to Wells for giving me the first glimpse of a world which had never before been open to me. In later years I saw much of almost all those present at this small dinner, especially, but not only, at the Reform Club. Here, in a corner of the smoking room after lunch, there would frequently be a small group including Wells himself, A. G. Gardiner, Buckmaster, Arnold Bennett and a few others. It is a pity that there was no one to paint a 'conversation piece' of the scene—and still more that there was none to record the conversation itself.

Wells was quickly alive, even in the early days of the silent film, to the future educational possibilities of the screen, and he made the acquaintance of many in the cinema world. It is a pity that it was many years before he found in

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either film magnates or artists any qualified to match their technique with his ideas. I well remember his rage when, after long negotiations with Hollywood to put his *Outline of History* on the screen, he was told that it was essential to add a continuing love interest; a pair of lovers must be miraculously reincarnated in each age and renew their romance. That was the end of that venture. He was sometimes more nearly fortunate in his contact with the artists. I was going into the Reform Club one day when I ran into him on the steps, accompanied by a good-looking man with dark hair fringed with white and striking black eyes. Wells made a vague gesture of introduction, without any audible names, before he saw someone he wished to speak to on the other side of the hall and left me to entertain his visitor. I am perhaps the only person who ever talked for a quarter of an hour to Charlie Chaplin, at the height of his fame, without knowing that I was talking to a film star. It is only, however, in recent years, when it was too late, that men have appeared in the screen world with the imagination, artistic genius, and interest in ideas required for a creative partnership.

Wells was among the early advocates of a League of Nations, and he collaborated with those who worked on a draft covenant during the first World War. He was profoundly disappointed in the actual League, which was based upon the inter-state principle and recognized and preserved national sovereignty. He followed the experiment closely, however, before turning and rending it, as he had so often turned and rent other institutions which had first roused his hopes and then disappointed him; and he came more than once to Geneva. The society there, with its diplomatic precedences, outlook and procedure, was not to his liking. Geneva suffered from the vice of all purely political capitals where official life dominates everything and there is no salutary corrective from the other interests and influences of a great metropolis. Its sense of values was distorted. (If Shakespeare and a Minister to Bogota appeared at a dinner table in such a centre, it would be the Minister who would properly be placed on the right of

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the hostess. That is, it is true, only a convenient convention, necessary to save hosts from more difficult assessments of relative importance—and would not matter if it were never taken as being more than it is; but in fact it always does, in some degree, destroy perspective.)

Neither Wells nor Shaw, when he too came, were accorded a reception appropriate to what they really were. It mattered little to them, however, for they had themselves a much more accurate assessment of the official world than the latter had of them; and it was characteristic of Wells that the people he wanted to see at Geneva were not those who occupied the limelight there but men like Salvador de Madariaga, whose books he knew, and Nansen (not as Norwegian delegate but as the explorer).

In the early stages of creative work, Wells, like most writers perhaps, needed stimulus, and personal contact with those with relevant experience and ideas; in the actual hours of writing, complete freedom from interruption; in periods, but outside the hours, of writing, companionship but not society. He was usually neither solitary nor social. He had for a number of years a villa at Malagnou near Grasse on the Riviera, and there he would write his books, though he came to London not infrequently for the 'friction of the mind' which, as he once told me, he found necessary before he began to write. I retain an impression from a short visit to Malagnou of a life so organized as to secure as many hours for work as any man could manage without impairment of health. Apart from more constant companionship, I was his only visitor in several weeks. He would write normally both throughout the morning and evening, and would take his writing pad to bed and work again in any hours of sleeplessness. He had a well-equipped study in the house, but when I asked if he wrote there he replied, with rather a wry smile, 'Well, I usually find it better to be a little further away, where I can rely more on being free from interruption.' In the afternoon we walked through his considerable estate. We came to a cottage, so I asked if he had tenants. He said that

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he had taken over the cottage and fixed up a study, which he found more convenient than the one in the house. We walked on, and some distance on, up a hill, we came to another cottage. I asked him about this. 'Well,' he said, 'I've fixed that up too so that I can be *really* alone.'

Wells was never, I think, attracted by good looks alone, and always required both intelligence and personality for companionship. But no one was allowed to interfere with his work. Behind all his responsive intimacies there was a very hard core that was unimpressionable and untouchable. As more than one found, not without distress, he never really gave himself in any personal association. In describing the relations between his autobiographical character 'William Clissold' and the Clementine of that book, he makes the former say, 'I have never given myself to anyone. I cannot conceive that anyone should ever be necessary to me.' For good or ill—and those who are assessing him in his personal relations and as a creative writer respectively will perhaps judge differently—he was in the last resort immune from the influence of others. Seen in an un-English environment, personal as well as material, he left one other very strong impression. In spite of his savage attacks on so many British institutions and conventions, he was in the roots of his being English—cockney English. Much indeed of the savagery of his attacks on English men and things was due to the disappointment of extravagant hopes or to the pull in himself of deep-rooted instincts against which he was rebelling. In England the rebel was more obvious; but a foreigner was conscious of his deep English roots—and might resent the casual visit of a compatriot which would bring what was English to the surface. 'I hate Englishmen to come here,' said one to me: 'he becomes intolerably English at once and is horrid to me for days.'

The future biographer will have an exceptionally rich source of material to draw upon. Every one of his books is a mirror of himself and his developing mind. In addition he wrote an autobiography in his seventh decade which is among

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the best ever written. It is exceptionally free of the vanity which few writers of their own experiences can prevent from distorting their perspective. He writes as an observer rather than a participant—as someone else might write of him if miraculously endowed with the knowledge that no one can have except about himself. The two volumes not only portray vividly the social environment in which he lived at different ages but his own changing relation to it. In his youth he is a mirror of the scene about him, recipient rather than reactive; in his middle life he becomes a more active element himself in his own environment, and the interest centres in his personality and its impact upon things and persons around him; in his later life he becomes increasingly identified with his impersonal purposes. To this he added an imaginary auto-obituary a few years later. He was then on the verge of seventy and beginning to be conscious that he was losing in his lifelong struggle to educate mankind into sanity. He once pictured his last days as spent in an 'asylum for the sane'.

Wide as is Wells' range he is not of course universal. There is little to show that great art, or music or poetry (though there is the stuff of poetry in some of his prose), meant much to him. Religion he understood so far as it consists in the submerging of self in impersonal purpose, but G. B. Shaw, for example, has a better comprehension of some other aspects of religion. In relation to human action and events his vision, though incomparable, is unequal. His insight into to-day, his foresight of the day after to-morrow, are both without rival. He sees to-morrow, however, less clearly. In his field of vision the foreground and the further distance are vivid, but the middle distance is obscure. This combines with other characteristics to make Wells less successful as a man of action than as a prophet and educator—for dead spots of insensitiveness in personal relations and his temperamental impatience contrast curiously with his patient pursuit of ultimate objectives.

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But how few are the limitations in comparison with the range of what he covered! He entered the public consciousness as a humorist; a social delineator; a writer of tales of scientific invention and imagination. He was content, however, to subordinate everything to being an educator and the prophet and preacher of an ordered world society. A few years before her death Beatrice Webb said to me, 'When you reach old age you either become scatter-brained or you have an obsession. G.B.S. has become scatter-brained. Sidney and I have an obsession, so has H. G. Wells.' This was his obsession—surely a noble one.

It may be seriously asked whether there is any single writer, living or dead, whose works by themselves would so nearly give a liberal education. He boldly affronted the chief evil of our day, the fragmentation of knowledge into unco-ordinated and increasingly unintelligible specialisms. In a world of the contented ignorance of the most learned in relation to every field of study but their own, he attempted, and more nearly with success than anyone else, to present knowledge as a whole in broad and intelligible outline to the man of ordinary intelligence and education. He was the greatest of modern synthesizers. The specialists have shown convincingly that they each have a minute patch which they know in greater detail than he did. They seem for the most part apparently unconscious of the very need of the synthesis which they have left the 'amateur' to attempt. Metaphysics, universal history, economics, science, there was little of human concern which was outside his scope, and there was nothing he touched which he did not illuminate.

In self-education he had qualities no less remarkable. He had sufficient modesty of mind, and responsive sympathy, to gather what he needed from every source and every type of person; he had an inner philosophy which drew food for its growth from everything that reached him. He was at the same time resistant to the distorting influence of other minds. For all his scathing contempt for the arrogance of the ignorant in positions of eminence and privilege, he could admire

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and revere. He never ceased to be grateful to the inspiration of men like T. H. Huxley, and among those more nearly his contemporaries he could recognize the quality of a mind superior in its own sphere to his own—he had, for example, a great admiration for Maynard Keynes. And even with those of a very different general calibre who had some specialized experience, he would listen, accept and welcome. I was able myself to help him a little in economics, as he very generously recognized in his chief book on the subject, and when he embarked on his *Open Conspiracy* he invited me to collaborate with him, though it was an invitation I was unable to accept. The hard core at the centre of his mind, and the responsive antennae at its periphery, were equally necessary for his achievement.

But the whole of his work of self-education and education of others, indeed the whole of his later work of every kind, was consciously the instrument of his main purpose—the preparation for an ordered world society. The central fact of Wells' life was his conviction of the necessity of changing the scope and character of government, and of the whole organization of society, in correspondence with the changed scope and character of the human activities which government and society need to control.

If mankind does after all achieve an ordered world society, there must for ever be high in the list of its prophets and pioneers the man who, in the Gethsemane of his last moments, cried bitterly that he—and mankind—had failed.

MAYNARD KEYNES

THE ARTIST-ECONOMIST

Of many memories of Maynard Keynes the most vivid and significant is that of his intervention in the Lords Debate on the American Loan. He had spent many weary months in negotiating the loan in America. He had just returned from an exhausting conference in Savannah. Both Houses of Parliament were anxious and doubtful about some provisions in the agreement, and irritated by being required to limit their consideration to a few days while the American Congress was taking many months. Keynes had to hurry from ship to train and from train to Westminster to plunge immediately into the debate in which he was to be the central figure. The peers filled the benches of their small chamber, and members of the Commons crowded behind the Bar to hear him. The acceptance of the Loan agreement was the climax of his long negotiations and the pivot of the plans for the International Bank and Fund, and of all British policy in regard to external finance, to which he had for years devoted his efforts. The attitude of Parliament depended more upon what he would say than on any Minister, though he was a comparatively new member of the ancient House he was to address. He rose, a dark, slight figure, obviously ageing, weary and ill. But he held all who heard him from the first moment to the last in a crescendo of intellectual excitement and interest. His argument was at once subtle, skilful and lucid; his soft, pleasing and persuasive voice and his delivery were perfectly adapted both to it and its audience. It was, for its specific purpose, one of the best and most successful speeches I have ever heard. 'Convincing and conclusive' was the general

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verdict: 'diabolically clever' was the comment of one of the Loan's principal opponents. This great speech at once mirrored the qualities of his mind and temperament and made his listeners remember, though it did not itself mention, the vast and varied achievement which lay behind it.

Keynes was indeed remarkable for a variety of talents and achievements, each supreme in its sphere, and yet fused into a unity in which each helped the others, so that it is not easy to select any single aspect of his mind and character. But in each of the many spheres of work which engaged his interest he was always the creative artist, with the temperament, the outlook and the special quality which we expect in literature and the arts and rarely find associated with business and administration. He was perhaps the best example in our century of the creative artist, and of a diversity of genius, in practical affairs.

His sheer intellect was of the rarest kind, with precision, penetrating force, and the cutting edge of a razor; and it seemed always to function at its best, without internal friction or apparent effort. H. G. Wells, the most caustic of contemporary critics, once remarked to me, after disparaging comments on other economists, 'But to Keynes' brain I can only describe my mind as abject'. He had at the same time a fertility and richness of imagination rarely found with a mind so precise and exact, and an inimitable impish wit. He was a master in the different spheres of mathematics, the humanities and all the arts. He was among the most brilliant of English writers; and a generous and creative patron of music, painting and the ballet. It is significant that, if his intellectual home was at Cambridge, he married one of the greatest of Russian dancers. He was at once artist and intellectual; economist, administrator, statesman; at home equally in Whitehall and the White House, in Cambridge, Westminster, Covent Garden, Threadneedle Street and Bloomsbury.

All these qualities and interests found full expression in his life and achievement. The son of Dr. Keynes, once Registry

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of Cambridge University, and of a mother who was once Mayor of Cambridge—both of whom have survived him—he went to Eton and King's and was quickly eminent in mathematics, classics, philosophy, political science, economics and literature. In 1906 he entered the Civil Service, second in the examination—he would have been first if the examiners had not given him his worst mark in economics ('presumably knowing less than I did')—and went into the India Office under John Morley. There he wrote his treatise on 'Probability' which won him his fellowship at King's and took him back to Cambridge after only two years in Whitehall. Always, however, afterwards, he united theory and practice, or turned in rapid succession from one to the other. In 1912 he wrote *Indian Currency and Finance*, which has remained a classic ever since, and in the following year became a member of a Royal Commission which left a deep imprint on Indian financial policy. With the outbreak of the first war he entered the Treasury. In each of the two great wars there was a period, before America entered as a belligerent, when the whole of our effort was endangered by an inadequacy of the foreign exchange resources required to pay for our essential imports, and a later period in which the extremely complex web of external commitments needed to be unravelled. In each of these periods the most skilful policy was required, and in each of them the brain behind it was that of Keynes. At the end of the first war Keynes was the principal Treasury representative at the Peace Conference and on the Supreme Economic Council. He resigned because he profoundly disagreed with the reparation provisions of the Treaty and a few months later published his famous book *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. He had hitherto been an economist and an official, with influence and a high reputation in the inner circles of government, but he was comparatively unknown outside these circles. He now became, as he remained for the rest of his life, a public figure of eminent stature with great influence on public opinion throughout the world.

He succeeded in moulding Anglo-Saxon opinion though

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he was less successful in changing immediate policy, in which France, the chief claimant of reparation, and other Allied countries, had their say. More recently there has been increasing doubt as to how far he was right in his original thesis, and whether his brilliant book did more good than harm. For good or ill it contributed greatly to the belief, both in Great Britain and still more in America, that not only was the reparation policy foolish and impracticable, but that the Treaty of Versailles was in general vindictive and evil. This in turn was a factor in increasing the isolationist forces in America and helping the nationalist movement in Germany.

Keynes read extracts to me from the manuscript of his book, some months before its publication, on a lawn in Sussex. It was at once evident that it would have a great influence. Its brilliance and passion made that certain, and much of what he said about the economic consequences of vast and undefined reparation payments was irresistibly convincing. I was at the time in agreement with him in his main reparation argument, and was of course enthralled by his descriptions of the scene at Paris and the statesmen there. But I was profoundly anxious about the effect in America of some of the passages in the book, and did my best to induce him to omit or change them—in particular the famous description of Woodrow Wilson and the ultimate impossibility of ‘debamboozling the old Presbyterian’. Not unnaturally I was unsuccessful. He believed passionately in the truth of what he had written, and though I myself feared the effect of much of the book on an American opinion only too ready to accept, and exaggerate, what he felt about Wilson and the scheming statesmen of Europe, neither he nor I could at that moment foresee how great that effect would be.

At this moment, and in retrospect, I should differ from his theme more profoundly than I did then. I believe that the Treaty of Versailles, as a whole, was a reasonably good and moderate Treaty, in the circumstances of the time. I believe that the principal European statesmen at Paris were wiser and more moderate than either the peoples on whom they

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depended for their position or their successors in later years. We are indeed in a better position now to appreciate both their difficulties and their achievement in securing a Treaty with the principal enemy nation, with no more defects than this one contained, within eight months of the end of hostilities. And it is, in my view, a completely mistaken view that Woodrow Wilson was unskilful or outmanoeuvred or that, in a settlement mainly affecting European countries, he or his country had an inadequate influence. Even the Reparations provisions, its worst feature, gave an opportunity for succeeding statesmen to adjust demands to capacity, and it was their responsibility, and not that of the men who framed the Treaty, that this opportunity was not wisely used. There can be no doubt, as a brilliant young Frenchman, killed in the recent war, Etienne Mantoux, has demonstrated in a posthumously published book, that Keynes was sometimes wrong in his facts and still more in his forecasts. He greatly understated the potential capacity of Germany to pay substantial reparations, under appropriate conditions, without disastrous consequences. Reparations did in fact prove a disastrous folly, for Germany paid less than the sums lent to her and defaulted, and immense harm resulted from the manner in which it was attempted to make her pay more. But this was due mainly to the unwisdom and disagreement of the Allied Governments which succeeded the Treaty-makers; and not to the fact that the exaction of reparation, on a larger scale than Keynes had advocated, was with appropriate methods either impossible or unjust. This is no place to discuss either the Treaty of Versailles or Reparations. It would be disingenuous, however, in this appreciation of Keynes and his achievement, not to record my view that, on the whole, his most famous book, brilliant and sincere as it was, did more harm than good; and that he was most in error when he achieved his most dramatic public success.

In the interval between the wars his range of individual activity was almost incredible. He lectured and taught at Cambridge, and he edited the *Economic Journal*. He was

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Chairman of the *Nation* and, later, after the merger, of the *New Statesman*. He took a principal part in determining the economic and financial policy of the Liberal Party. He was, most unfortunately, unable to persuade the Conservative Government of 1925 not to restabilize the pound at its old parity—an error which was largely responsible for the general strike and for a depression which occurred in Great Britain when the rest of the world was recovering. But he was right in what he advised, and accurate in his prophecy of the consequences.

A few years later he transformed the economic thinking of Great Britain and the whole of the Western world. He became, beyond challenge, the world's leading economist alike in his fame and in his demonstrable influence upon policy; the most creative in developing basic economic theory; the most constructive in applying the new economics to practical affairs; the most brilliant in exposition and in advocacy; and among the ablest, too, in actual administration and as a negotiator. He was trained in, and for long taught, the Ricardian economics which both reflected and encouraged economic progress under the particular, and temporary, conditions of the nineteenth century. Under these conditions the *laissez-faire* system, within a framework only of the gold standard, penalties against fraud, and factory legislation, had a self-corrective faculty which, though less perfect than the economists' idealized presentation, seemed preferable to any practical alternative. In our own time, and under different conditions of industrial organization and social laws, its limitations have become increasingly obvious and serious in their consequences, of which the most dramatic has been the phenomenon of mass unemployment. In face of this new, and intolerable, evil the old orthodox economics seemed to offer nothing but the fatalism of despair, preaching that every remedy would bring more evils than it cured. Against this fatalism Keynes revolted. He worked his way gradually to a coherent public policy, in relation to the gold standard, to the timing of public expenditure, to the control

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and guidance of all forms of investment, which would combine collective direction with individual initiative; and he developed a new economic theory which would be compatible with such a policy. His great book, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, marked the end of one and the beginning of another economic era; it was comparable in what it represented and the influence it had, with Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Orthodox economic theory taught that savings made by the individual flowed through the banks to the business community and by them were used to create additional productive plant; it assumed the full utilization of the economic resources available. Keynes in this book demonstrated that this was a fallacious assumption, and that there is no automatic mechanism in the *laissez-faire* capitalist system to ensure an equation between the total demand and the supply of productive labour. He argued that 'in contemporary conditions the growth of wealth, so far from being dependent on the abstinence of the rich, is more likely to be impeded by it. One of the chief social justifications of wealth is, therefore, removed.' He urged that the general rate of interest should be controlled from the centre, that public expenditure should be timed in relation to the trade cycle, and that capital development should, under certain conditions, be deliberately stimulated. The theoretical basis of this argument was, and continues to be, vigorously debated by economists. But enough of his doctrine to support most of his practical conclusions may now be said to be accepted as orthodox. In any event these conclusions have in fact been embodied in policy both in Great Britain and in other countries.

To this result Keynes himself contributed by constant exposition and advocacy, not only to economists, but to statesmen and the public, in book, in pamphlet, on the platform, in committee and in the Press; his doctrine was adjusted and applied to every current problem and the changing conditions of the moment. With some of this activity I was occasionally associated. We signed letters jointly to *The*

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Times, for example, on public expenditure and we were both members of a small economists' committee of the Economic Advisory Council, which made confidential recommendations to the Government; these included many of the proposals which, though rejected at the time, were later embodied in the official policy of both the Coalition and the Labour Governments. In a small expert committee of this kind Keynes was at his best, persuasive, conciliatory, convincing, and at once patient and persistent. His adherents, and his influence, grew in Great Britain, in the United States and throughout the world. The 'New Deal' under Roosevelt and the new 'full employment' policies in Great Britain owe more to him than can ever be precisely assessed. That the heresy of a quarter of a century ago has become the new orthodoxy is certainly due more to him than to any other man.

This is not to say that Keynes was always right or always consistent. The fertility and force of his inspiration often drove him beyond the facts and into exaggeration. He certainly overstated his argument as to Reparations, as I have already suggested. He sometimes pursued too far for its intrinsic beauty the iridescent bubble of a new idea. He sometimes pressed a principle sound in itself (like the 'multiplier') beyond what the facts would bear. One sometimes feels that it is necessary to class his changing doctrines by their year like a vintage wine. But in retrospect, over a quarter of a century, we see an inner, dynamic, consistency in the development of his thought; his was the progress of a pioneering discoverer, with no more than the minor deviations of route which are inevitable when new territory is being opened.

It is indeed scarcely possible to overstate the extent of Keynes' influence upon not only the thought but the actual policy of his time. Unlike that of statesmen alternating between office and opposition, his position and his influence were continuous through successive administrations; and more than anyone of our time in Whitehall whose position has been exempt from political changes, he himself made the

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policy he administered. In his last years, too, he contributed more than any other single person to the creation of the world institutions through which currency, external investment, reconstruction, international trade, will in future be controlled or affected, and the framework of general principles within which they will work. At the time of his death he was in a pivotal position to influence current policy both at home and throughout the world; and he was at the summit of his intellectual powers and prestige. It is impossible to estimate what he might have done in the years immediately ahead.

In the early part of the recent war four veterans of the first war's civilian administration who were not for the moment being employed, Maynard Keynes, William Beveridge, Walter Layton and myself, used to meet weekly in Keynes' house. We were in fact all of us roped in within a few months, each to a job which was astonishingly similar to what we had had when we could draw upon the vigour of youth. Of the four Maynard Keynes was the only one already sorely stricken in health (his heart had become seriously affected in 1937). His work in the war proved to be the most exacting and the longest continued. It was a miracle of will, and devotion to the public service, that he was able to bear the terrific burden that fell on him during those six years; to guide again, as he had done before, the external financial policy of this country; to construct again the new foundations of international policy, financial and economic, for the years ahead. It is miraculous that he did so much. It is no wonder, but it is a tragedy for the world, that his work killed him.

The most surprising fact of Keynes' life, however, is that his work as an economist and an administrator was only one of many activities. He organized the Camargo Ballet, he founded the Arts Theatre at Cambridge. He became Chairman of C.E.M.A., and later of the Arts Council. He opened the first post-war ballet season at Covent Garden. He was a collector of paintings and a trustee of the National Gallery. He was one of the greatest book collectors and connoisseurs

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of our time. And he was, incidentally, a most successful man of business. As bursar of King's he greatly enlarged the resources of the college. He was chairman of the National Mutual Life Assurance Company. He was successful in almost all he touched and, though in 1908 he had needed financial assistance to enable him to return to Cambridge, he later acquired a considerable fortune which enabled him to endow generously the arts in which he was interested.

I am more concerned now, however, with the man than with his achievement. I knew him for some thirty years; was his disciple, colleague and friend through two wars and the years between. He was, at a first meeting—and, for some, always—a formidable person, though less to his juniors than to those whose position was greater than their intellectual distinction. To his pupils he was an inspiring teacher, to Ministers not infrequently a rather terrifying subordinate. Amid those of lesser calibre than his own—and who was not?—he was not unconscious of the difference, and did not conceal his opinion of others' folly. He was no respecter of persons; and he was not among those for whom a Minister holding high office is surrounded by a halo which should give exemption from an equal judgement of personal quality. His wit was penetrating and often wounding; and the brilliance of his inimitable pen-portraits would both exaggerate and immortalize the less admirable qualities of a victim. He was the strangest civil servant Whitehall has ever seen, less the servant and more the master of those he served than any I have known.

No one, however, will understand Keynes who does not appreciate his rich humanity, the depth of his capacity for emotion, and the moral fervour which gave an impelling force to his public crusades and infused all his personal relations. As a teacher he was inspiring and indefatigable, with a quality in him that won deep affection and devotion. Even his caustic, and sometimes cynical, wit was, in some sense, a form of self-protection against an exceptionally

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sensitive temperament and the wounds of frustrated idealism. And in personal relations he had both charm and a compelling courtesy.

The picture of his person and presence, the memory of his personality, are vivid before me as I write. He had a feline grace, with something of a wizard's magnetism and fascination. In argument with him, as with Socrates, a disputant felt the numbing influence of a basilisk's eye. His body and his limbs seemed loosely strung on to his head, like subordinate appanages rather than equal members. His black and beady eyes, deep set in his thin and elongated face, reminded one sometimes of a very intelligent and dangerous spider. But his voice was melodious, penetrating, persuasive, a perfect medium for his beguiling eloquence as for his incisive wit. And voice, presence and manner combined to give an irresistible charm which expressed the richness of his personality no less than his intellectual genius. He was supreme in many diverse spheres of action, in each of which he was both at home and an alien from elsewhere. But in all of them he was not only the intellectual but the creative artist.

WOODROW WILSON

THE INFLEXIBLE WILL

A great historical drama remains one day to be written round the central figure of Woodrow Wilson. It will be a tragedy in three dimensions.

There will first be the triumph and failure of the man himself, expressed in the crucial events of his life; the passage from the Presidency of a University to the Presidency of the Republic; the reluctant acceptance, as the instrument of fate, of the uncongenial rôle of a great war leader; the more welcome and suitable part of prophet and priest of a new political religion; the brief and sudden elevation to a place of greater authority over more millions of mankind than any mortal man had previously enjoyed; the complete collapse, at the climax of his triumph, both of political power and physical strength; the last dark years of disappointment and impotent paralysis.

Then, projected from this centre figure, there will be the drama of the world's hopes and disillusionment; the more slowly evolving doom which, in two decades, reached its climax in the second World War; the tragic commentary of subsequent events upon the creed of the Fourteen Points.

But, intertwined with the personal, and the historical, drama will be a third theme, timeless and for ever recurrent in man's experience—the strength and the weakness of an unyielding will. Wilson will be presented not only as an individual but as the incarnation of his most outstanding and distinctive quality. At the core of Wilson's character the will and purpose were like a rock of granite. It was this that gave

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him the strength to master all opposition of academic tradition and prejudice at Princeton; that brought him to, and through, the Governorship of New Jersey against the embattled forces of political machinery and vested interests; that raised him to his supreme eminence in the concluding months of the war and the early weeks of the Peace Conference. It was upon this rock, as upon a jagged reef, that he was wrecked when already in sight of the harbour. There was a moment when only a hair's breadth separated him from success: when the opponents of ratification were ready to yield at the price of a minor face-saving concession which all other countries would willingly have accepted. It was not to be. Wilson's strength became his fatal weakness. The very quality which had brought him from academic seclusion to supreme world power, now at the crisis of his fate—tragically reinforced by his physical condition—thrust him down to the shades. The inner drama of Wilson's life is the triumph and tragedy of the unshakable will; a Greek drama of inexorable doom.

The concluding scene in such a drama would be between Wilson and Lord (Robert) Cecil. The two men had been the principal architects of the League of Nations. It was for both the central purpose of their lives, as it was for a time the chief hope of mankind. After the Senate had refused to ratify the Treaty and the League, and the League itself had begun to work out its still obscure, but inescapable, fate; after Wilson himself, broken and paralysed, was brooding in retirement upon his hopes and failure, Cecil paid him a visit. He was in a darkened room with one side of his body paralysed, with one arm rigid and useless, shattered and impotent. But his mind was clear; his will what it had always been. The two men talked freely of one incident and the other of the past. But through all the ranging reminiscence there was one recurrent refrain. Wilson would break in, time after time, to say: 'We shall still win: no compromise.' At last Cecil said farewell and turned to go. As he opened the door, he was stopped by a summons from Wilson. 'Remember,' he said,

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'no compromise.' The door closed; and as it closes the curtain may well fall.

No one certainly will present a true picture of Wilson to posterity who fails to realize the central fact of his unyielding and uncompromising will. I once met a popular biographer at a party given to Mrs. Woodrow Wilson at Geneva. He told me he was contemplating a life of Wilson, and he had come to see whether he could get some intimate information from Mrs. Wilson which he could not obtain from any other source. I asked him what specially interested him. 'I should like above all,' he said, 'to know whether there was anything in Wilson's childhood experience that would account for the latent weakness in his character which in the end led to this failure.' This of the man whose outstanding quality, among all the great leaders of history, was an unshakable will—whose tragedy came not from weakness but from strength, not from flinching courage but inability to compromise. Happily this particular biography was never written.

A statesman's place in history depends upon the fate of the policies and the institutions with which he was identified in his lifetime. It is difficult to present a picture of Woodrow Wilson a quarter of a century after his death which is not coloured by the failure of the League of Nations to prevent a second great war. Personal quality, however, is better seen without the refracting light of later knowledge; and it may be of some interest to repeat an appreciation I wrote in 1932, a few months before Hitler seized power, and when it was still possible to hope that another great war was not inevitable.

'Justice is a child of peace and not of conflict; and a just settlement will not, save by a rare accident, be wrested from an armed struggle. It is well that the world should recognize that war, by its very nature, arouses passions out of which neither justice nor enduring peace are likely to be born; that imposed terms will never be the same as an agreement negotiated between equals; and that statesmen whose power is dependent on those who, in the moment of victory after long

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agony, clamour for its spoils, will rarely if ever be allowed to act, even if they would, as impartial arbitrators. The sword once drawn will be thrown weightily into the scales of justice.

'The world was indeed more fortunate than it might have been in the three statesmen who were in supreme office when the conflict passed from the entrenched field to the conference table; and it has since done them scant justice. Each was better than the prevailing majority of the public he served. Wilson lost his power not because he agreed to conditions inimical to peace, but because he made the establishment of the League of Nations the first object of his policy. Lloyd George's Parliament (though it is true that his own action was partly responsible for its character and composition) was throughout putting pressure on him, not that he should be more generous but more extortionate. Clemenceau was thrown from office, not because he had imposed a Carthaginian peace, but because he had not seized the Rhineland provinces for France.

'Publicists themselves exempted from the agonies of the war by distance or extreme youth; and others who have not learnt that, when the great stakes of war are played and lost, the forfeit cannot, in this world of human passions, be wholly remitted, have since portrayed the trio of Versailles as the arch-demons of a vindictive drama. To those who understand the passions and the problems with which they had to contend they will rather appear, on a sober retrospect, as the triune Atlas of a crumbling world.

'True, there are grave defects in the treaties by a standard of ideal justice. Here and there, fragments of territory not great indeed, but enough to comprise much human misery, were allotted because of pledges extorted in a crisis of the deadly struggle. More often principles, each sound in itself, self-determination on the one hand, the natural lines of trade and economic advantage on the other, were in conflict; or, as in Transylvania, blobs and patches of different races were dispersed in a way which made any conformity of frontier with nationality impossible. Alleviating safeguards

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were provided for the protection of minorities, but no solution satisfactory by every test was practicable. Reparation was perhaps the worst defect; but even there a mechanism of adjustment was included which could have been utilized if the public temper of later years had been more generous; and the domination of the Saar, in effect a part of the reparation provisions, was an injustice which was at least to terminate at a specified date. It was not the fault of the framers of the Treaty but of their successors if the alleviating mechanism which they had provided was not more generously or more justly used.

‘When all is said, what settlement after a decisive result in war has been to so great an extent based on principles (such as self-determination), independent of that result? It was not justice entire and spotless; but it was more justice than war usually gives. “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?”

‘Of the trio of Versailles, Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George, it is the first whose figure will loom the greatest in history—if, indeed, as we too hastily assume, posterity will disentangle truth from the conflicting and confused records of contemporaries. Strangest of all modern myths is the legend that Europe made peace without America, or that the most unshakable will of our age was guilty of a weak compliance. Consider the facts. The war was one of Europe, into which America entered only in mid course. The presence, and still more the prospects of her unexhausted resources exercised a potent influence at the end. But others had borne the heat and burden of the day. France lost more than thirty times as high a proportion of her manhood. The questions to be settled by the Treaties were four-fifths of them European. It was European countries which had to live with the consequences of the settlement, from which America was parted by 3000 miles of intervening sea.

‘And yet, not only did Wilson exercise the chief influence on all general questions, such as the establishment of the machinery for preventing future war, and on the problems

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of other continents such as China, but even in Europe his voice was equal to that of the spokesman of any other great power. For good or ill, the principle of self-determination was potent, and the exceptions to its application not frequent or of considerable extent. In what other century would a war so ending not have been followed by the cession of the Rhineland? In the Polish Corridor it is well to remember that there are a large majority of Poles; in ceded Transylvania more Roumanians than Magyars. The fate of Upper Silesia was left to a plebiscite—perhaps misleading in its verdict and misapplied, but that was the fault of others. The new sovereignties carved out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been formed by the spontaneous uprising of the constituent nationalities before the war ended; they were not created but only consolidated by the Peace Treaty. Perhaps in all these cases “economic” considerations should have counted for rather more when they conflicted with those of nationality. But that suggests no weak compliance on the part of the apostle of self-determination.

‘If we wish to see the real quality of Wilson, proved already as President of Princeton and Governor of New Jersey, again displayed at Versailles, we can do no better than consider his successful fight for the inclusion of the Covenant of the League as the first Chapter of the Peace Treaties. He fought almost alone. The realists were against him—they wanted to get on with their business of concluding with Germany. Distant and impracticable idealists, misdirecting a public opinion that should have helped him, were also against him—pleading that the “holy thing” should be uncontaminated by the evil treaty. He was ill-supported while absent for a time in Washington and had to fight hard to recover ground ceded and almost irreparably lost. But to him this was the first and greatest objective of his policy. He won. And he was right—abundantly right. Let those who know what it has since meant to secure world acceptance of even the shortest and simplest Treaty to strengthen the foundations of peace, ask themselves what chance there would have been of

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establishing that comprehensive, skilful and flexible instrument, with its rigorous and detailed obligations and commitments, if the peace had been first and separately concluded. We should still be talking about it—if we had not ceased to do so in despair. There would to this day have been no League, nor any other alternative mechanism of peace that would have any chance of coping with its task.

'This was the greatest decision, the greatest achievement of Wilson's life. It would have been impossible for one who did not combine the vision of the idealist, the practical insight into the conditions of success of a realist, and an unshakable will, unmoved by either the opposition of foes or the foolish counsel of friends. If the world does indeed prevent the recurrence of great wars, it will be to this great act of this great man, more than to any other person or event in history, that the world will owe its salvation.

'It was not in Paris but in Washington that Wilson met his first great defeat. Neither the Triple Pact (by which he secured the Rhineland for Germany); nor the League (which he had placed in the forefront of his policy); nor the Treaty of which his principle of self-determination is a principal pillar, was ratified by his own country. There was indeed a moment when that same impregnable will, which had brought him for some months to the highest eminence of world power ever reached by man, was his undoing. He would not stoop to conquer—he would not make the slightest gesture of inclination. It was an infirmity—but that last infirmity of a noble and unshakable mind which will break before it will bend. He preferred, when a slight concession might have won ratification, to fight for the last iota of the deed he had signed with the last ounce of strength he possessed. Even then he might have won if, at this last crisis of his fate, not his spirit, but his body had not failed him, just too soon. Like Stresemann, in the face of his doctors' advice, he made the better choice and, knowing well the cost, started on that last tour of persuasion from which he returned stricken, shattered and impotent.

Woodrow Wilson

'Those who saw Wilson most nearly are not in all respects best qualified to appraise him. He neither gathered his knowledge, nor formed his decisions, nor exerted his main influence in personal contacts. He had not Lloyd George's sensitiveness to impressions, nor his lightning response, nor his personal magnetism. He seemed—I recall a first impression of a direct conversation—rather formal, academic, donnish. He was at his strongest in detachment from immediate personal influence; and often in Washington he seemed to shun contact with strong personalities around him, as if to preserve the integrity and independence of his own thought. His training was that of a historian and a scholar, and the chiselled phrase of the written word expressed him better than the quick repartee of debate.

'His figure thus seemed less in 1919 than 1918. How could it not? For a few weeks he had wielded more power than any mortal man in recorded history. Throughout the belligerent world his voice had been stronger in nearly every country than that of its own Government. He voiced the better mood of a distracted world, vindictive and aspiring in turn, and throughout the subsequent reaction he still held something of that mood, and used it to build what was most worthy of it.

'Such a man needs distance to be seen in his full stature. The flaws of temperament, the errors of judgement from which none are wholly exempt, the political passions which he shared and from which he suffered, loom too large on a near view; and the main outlines of his personality are unseen or seen out of their due perspective. The figure of Wilson will loom in history above his lesser contemporaries and across the valleys of intervening generations of lesser successors.'

In retrospect, how many anxious questionings assail the bright hopes and confident dogmatism of the years that followed the last war! Is self-determination a cement or a solvent of world order? Is the inter-state system of the League, repeated in the Charter of the United Nations with

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no significant change of structure (as distinct from membership), an adequate form of world government; or must we, can we, replace it by a true supernational authority, based not upon a compact between sovereign states but the direct support and loyalty of the peoples? And if so, is the interstate system which we have now reconstituted a help or an obstacle to the true solution? Such questions are necessarily raised by any review of Wilson's place in history.

The purpose of this book of anecdotes and impressions, however, is not to embark directly upon such themes but only to illustrate the way in which the personal characteristics of men in positions of authority—and even apparently trivial accidents—may affect the trend of world events. Two incidents in Wilson's life are especially illuminating, because they show how something that would be trivial in itself may be of decisive importance in conjunction with a personal defect of character in a great leader.

The main cause of the League's inability to prevent another war was the weakness that resulted from America's absence. But the Covenant only just failed to secure ratification. It secured a majority in the Senate, though not the legally necessary two-thirds majority. The turning of seven votes would have made the difference. The chief opponent was Senator Lodge. He made the defeat of the League the main purpose of his life; his efforts certainly counted far more than the number of votes on which the issue turned. But what was Lodge's impelling motive? He had at first been a supporter of the League. He changed his policy at a time when he was in bitter personal enmity with Wilson. This enmity was largely due, I am told, to a single personal experience. The tale is an interesting one but, as I have no direct personal knowledge of it and cannot vouch for the details, I must leave it to a compatriot of his to tell if it is ever told at all.

But the moment came when Lodge could not have carried enough Senators with him if Wilson was willing to conciliate the waverers by a few minor concessions. The changes which

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they would accept for this purpose were published. At this point Viscount Grey, who was at the time in a better position than anyone else to speak for League members on the European side of the Atlantic, thought he might help the President by saying that, if these changes were offered by him, he felt he could assure him that the other countries concerned would willingly agree. Had Wilson and Grey been on terms of intimate mutual confidence, this would perhaps have been welcomed as the helpful gesture it was intended to be. But Wilson was, on the contrary, indignant at his intervention. His temper hardened and he declared 'not the dotting of an "i" or the crossing of a "t"' should be altered. The fatal vote followed. Now behind the unhappy personal relations was a trivial but tragic incident. When Lord Reading was Ambassador, a young man in the British Embassy, an indiscreet diner-out, had made a disparaging remark about Mrs. Wilson. Wilson heard of it and asked the Embassy to send him back to London. As, however, Lord Reading was about to end his office, it was accepted as sufficient that, without the open scandal of obvious dismissal, the young man should return to London with the Ambassador's suite. Lord Grey succeeded Lord Reading. By some inexcusable folly or carelessness the same young man came back with him. Wilson was naturally furious, and his anger expressed itself in his attitude to Grey. Every quality and principle in Grey's character and outlook was such as would have seemed to ensure a relationship of intimate friendship with the President. As it was, during all his term, the President never once saw him; still less was there at any time a friendly and intimate conversation between them. This estrangement was the background to Wilson's reaction to Grey's gesture after his return to England from a completely barren term of office in Washington.

Now it is true, of course, that Lodge had other reasons, based on a general outlook on foreign policy, for opposing the League—whether or not they would have furnished a sufficiently strong impelling motive for his campaign. It is true

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that Wilson was in any case disinclined for even the smallest compromise, and might have refused it even if it had been an intimate friend who had suggested acceptance. Nor must we forget that the main cause of the Senate's action was that Wilson, unlike Roosevelt twenty years later, refused to associate Republican leaders with his war and peace policy. It may also well be that the isolationist forces in America which found their expression in a Senate rejection of the Covenant would have made America's participation in the League ineffective; that instead of immediate rejection the League might have suffered the even more fatal injury of indifferent participation culminating in withdrawal. It may be. But it may also be that two trivial personal incidents, with their impact on the personal qualities of the leaders concerned, changed the whole course of subsequent history. In these possibilities—in this uncertainty—we have a good illustration of the puzzle presented to the historian by the interaction of personal characteristics, and of incident and accident, with the larger impersonal forces behind the march of world events.

FOUR AMERICAN VIGNETTES

It has been my good fortune over the last quarter of a century to find myself collaborating in practical work with a great number of Americans, and to make many friendships based upon association in common and constructive tasks. During the first World War, in the problems of Reparation afterwards, in the financial reconstruction schemes of the League of Nations, in the second World War, I have been engaged in intimate and daily work of this kind, and as a result have had as many friends on the other side of the Atlantic as on this. It is my conviction that there is no better foundation for sincere and enduring personal relations than to be engaged together in an interesting and useful enterprise and to develop mutual respect in the course of it. And it is my experience that, in the great majority of cases, association in this way between Americans and English for any considerable time has this result. This may be a factor of the first importance in the years immediately ahead, for in the last few years millions of Americans and British have been working and fighting side by side in the vast civilian organization supplying the forces and in the armed forces themselves. The armies under General Eisenhower were fused into a single force to an extent that would perhaps have been impossible with any two other nations, or any other leadership. As the men return to their own countries they will, it is to be hoped, provide to the relationships of the two countries a substratum of common memories, mutual respect and often of personal friendship, such as has never before existed on anything like the same scale.

Of the score or more of those with whom I have myself been thus associated in civilian work, I will only now select

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four, as in some measure representative of all, four who are unhappily no longer here to share in the new tasks for which their qualities would have so well equipped them.

Dwight W. Morrow is the first of these I knew. He came into the Ministry of Shipping, in its improvised home on the lake of St. James's Park, in 1917, soon after America had entered the war and when the submarine attack had made merchant shipping the Achilles' heel of the whole Allied war effort. Short and stocky, with a face rugged—almost ravaged—and aquiline; eyes circled with large horn spectacles; hair usually mussed up, with overhanging locks so that he looked like a tufted bird; he was at once a very striking and an unmistakably American figure. His personal quality was not immediately evident. He accepted, indeed preferred, since it would leave him free for other tasks, a quite minor official position as expert on a sub-committee of the Allied Maritime Transport Executive, of which I was at the time the Chairman. It seemed, and was, an inadequate rôle for one who, after a brief but brilliant career as a lawyer, had already in his forties been for three years a partner in the great firm of J. P. Morgan. But his influence was in fact ubiquitous and important over the whole of the Allied supply system, and penetrated also into the Army organization. In all his work then, and throughout his career, he was guided by a few simple principles. First find the facts—*all* the important facts that are relevant—before you let yourself even begin to form a policy; second, try to penetrate the real mind of the person you are negotiating with, to see the problem as he sees it, to understand what it is that is really important to him; third, try to evolve out of this a solution which will require the least sacrifice of what matters most to him without abandoning what is both essential and just from your own point of view, a solution which will really be to the common interest and not a diplomatic score. These principles are simple in statement, but I do not think I have ever known anyone in international negotiations who pursued them so consistently, sincerely—

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and industriously—as Dwight Morrow. It was this, with the unmistakable integrity of his character, that made him during the next fourteen years a man of such influence in international affairs, perhaps the greatest of those who remained always in the background and neither sought the limelight nor occupied any position which necessarily gave it.

Morrow was a curiously reluctant millionaire, and while he was still a comparatively poor man one of his most vivid nightmares was that he would become excessively rich. When money did come it always seemed an external accident, and the purpose it served was to enable him, in pursuing his public interests, to forget about it; and no man was ever less corrupted by riches. So it was too with power; he was by temperament an academic recluse, impelled by public spirit into public affairs. More than once it was difficult to persuade him not to retire to his much loved Amherst; and any discussion of an immediate problem was liable to be diverted by a disquisition on what seemed to him (and usually not to his listeners), a relevant analogy from history or some philosophic theory. At such times he would be completely absorbed in his theme, and indifferent to every practical consideration, walking about the room, alternately stabbing the air with his pipe and losing it.

After the war he was mainly occupied, from his vantage point in Morgan's, with the financial aspects of European reconstruction, though he remained in New York and was not a member of the Dawes or Young Committees or similar bodies working in Europe. He was perhaps the principal factor in securing the participation of American finance in the League's first great, and successful, scheme of reconstruction in Austria. It had been hoped in Europe that he would be the Agent General for Reparation in Berlin appointed under the Dawes plan, but an unfortunate misunderstanding, and a sensitive reluctance on his part to appear anxious for office, prevented this. He was not, however, to escape public responsibility. He became Ambassador in Mexico, where in a peculiarly difficult situation he pursued his own distinctive

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methods of diplomacy with great success, leaving a permanent impression on Mexico and on the diplomatic traditions of America. He was recalled to become a member of the United States Delegation, under Henry L. Stimson, to the Naval Conference of 1930 in London, and was perhaps the principal factor in the success of that Conference. Immediately afterwards he took the first decisive step to association with public affairs on a more permanent basis by becoming a Senator; and he would, had he lived, have been on the United States Delegation to the Disarmament Conference of 1932. The new adventure was, however, a short one for, after speaking on behalf of a philanthropic cause on the evening of 4th October, 1931, he died during the same night of a cerebral hæmorrhage.

The most vivid memory I retain of this remarkable man, so great a figure in the inner circles of finance and diplomacy, so little known outside, comes from the autumn of 1918. He and I, and a few others, went in October through the recently liberated regions of France. We were the first civilians from outside France to enter Lille, and as the town was out of bounds for the military, we were for the citizens the symbol of victory and liberation and were greeted accordingly. Turning the corner of a street I saw a short, stumpy figure standing on a barrel in the midst of a cheering crowd; a face of passionate earnestness, a rather raucous voice, disordered hair and a hat waved violently in the right hand accompanied the most warmly applauded speech that Morrow ever made. 'Vive la France!' were almost the only words of French he had. They were enough.

Roland W. Boyden was the American observer (in effect member without vote) on the Reparation Commission, in Paris, of which I was General Secretary in 1920 and 1921. It was a position of some delicacy and difficulty. The American Senate had declined to ratify the Peace Treaty of Versailles, including the provisions as to reparation as well as the League of Nations. No American could therefore be a

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full member of the Commission. This had the incidental consequence that all the provisions of the Treaty which had been designed to ensure that there should be an uneven number of voting members, were nullified, and the French Chairman was given an unintended casting vote—a privilege which, though rarely if ever actively used, underlay all the discussions and decisions. At the same time it was evident that America must be greatly concerned in all the problems that centred in reparations, with their reactions on inter-allied debts and the reconstruction of Europe; and in fact in the abortive Bankers Committee of 1922 and in the more important Dawes and Young Committees of 1924 and 1929, America took not only an important, but the leading, rôle. The exercise of influence, usually in a direction opposed to that of French policy, on so ambiguous a formal basis, required special qualities of persuasive tact in the American observer and his colleagues on the United States' delegation. Boyden possessed these qualities in a very exceptional degree. Coming from a New England home, and bringing legal and banking experience from Boston, he had a blend of tolerant wisdom with insight into the very different preoccupations and policy of Great Britain and France; and played his rôle of wise conciliation with a persuasive modesty which won the respect and affection of all who knew him.

I recall him now especially because one unrecorded incident in his career well illustrates the part that trivial accidents play in human affairs. In 1922 the League of Nations embarked on its great experiment of financial reconstruction in Austria. It was a novel venture destined to have great results not only for Austria but for all the schemes of the following years for restoring the economies of Europe, and stabilizing currencies. But it was much more than a financial scheme. Its most interesting feature was that it used the political jealousies of the other countries interested in Austria's fate to unite them in a common policy which would safeguard each from what it feared from the ambitions of others. And in Austria itself the scheme seemed to offer an opportunity of

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resolving the internal political dissension which divided the country. The Austrian Government at the time was a Christian Socialist one, based on a small and precarious majority—that is, it was Catholic and Conservative and opposed to ‘Socialists’ in the ordinary political sense. But Vienna itself was under the control of a Socialist municipality, led by men of remarkable character and ability. They had embarked upon bold schemes of municipal housing and other forms of public enterprise. Their opponents accused them of extravagance but could make no plausible charge of either incompetence or personal corruption against men whose ability and standards of personal integrity compared favourably with those of the national Government. The differences were bitter and, with so equal a division between the parties, frequently resulted in deadlock, as they were some years later destined to result in civil war. (One amusing example was the Socialist decision to build a crematorium, and the Catholic objection to cremation, a controversy of which the actual solution was found in the building of the crematorium and the prohibition of its use.)

It was evident that a great League loan, which necessarily involved a control for some time of all public expenditure, would have a profound influence on internal politics, and might be used as either a bridge between the opponents or a further factor of discord. The League of Nations had of course to negotiate with Dr. Seipel, the Prime Minister of the national Government. We were acutely conscious, however, of the strength and importance of the Socialist municipal authority in Vienna and of the danger of allowing the loan to be used to reinforce the anti-Socialist Government against this authority. We had some reason to believe that, if tactfully invited, the municipal leaders of Vienna could be associated, under the Presidency of the League’s representative, with those of the national Government. We hoped that co-operation of this kind would tend to allay the intensity of the political controversy. We realized at the same time that any such chance would depend largely upon the personal

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qualities of the League's High Commissioner. After the most careful search those of us on the staff at Geneva who were most concerned with the Austrian scheme came to the conclusion that Boyden would be the most suitable man. The principal financial authorities outside Geneva, however, whose co-operation was essential, preferred a man of a harder, sharper temper, who would not flirt with Socialists. Their choice was Zimmerman, who had founded a municipal reputation by his success in opposing Socialists in Rotterdam—and had come to regard opposition to Socialism as a kind of crusade. It was obvious that, with such a man to represent the League, we might make a success of reconstruction—but it would not be with the co-operation of the Socialists who controlled Vienna. After much discussion the Council upheld the view of the Geneva officials, and the financial authorities did not withdraw their support. We were authorized to approach Boyden, still representing the United States Government at the Reparation Commission in Paris. He was willing to accept and asked the consent of the State Department, who gave it in a briefly worded telegram. All was regarded as settled and I went to Vienna with some colleagues to handle the first stages of the work before the issue of the loan or the arrival of the Commissioner. Meanwhile, however, much important time had passed. It soon became urgently necessary to make a public announcement of the name of the new Commissioner, or the prospects of the future loan, on which everything depended, would be fatally prejudiced. I telephoned to Boyden, then on a visit to Berlin, to agree on the terms of the announcement. To my horror he said, 'I'm extremely sorry. I've just had another cable from the State Department cancelling the first. I cannot now accept the appointment.'

There was no option but to proceed at once with the appointment of Zimmerman. He came; the scheme was a success in restoring Austria to a position of comparative prosperity, equal to that of other less hardly hit countries of Central Europe, which lasted till this, with so much more in

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Europe, was destroyed by the great world financial crisis of a decade later. But this was an end of the other aspect of our hopes. The Socialists stood outside and watched with jealous suspicion, though without actual opposition, the progress of a scheme which did restore, but might also have united, the country. When the great crisis of the thirties came, there was no memory of previous collaboration to allay the forces of political dissension or to avert the civil strife and all that followed from it. Perhaps it was a vain hope from the beginning. We shall never know. For such chance as there was depended on a Boyden; it was impossible with a Zimmerman.

Only years afterwards did Boyden, and I, learn that the cable was a tragic mistake. Someone, going through the cables, had been struck with the curtness of the first message giving consent to Boyden's resignation of his post in Paris. He had pointed out that Boyden had rendered great service there, and it was only right that some recognition should be expressed, and appropriate regret that the United States Government was losing his services. A second cable was therefore dispatched expressing the reluctance of the Government at his departure. It was apparently not intended to prevent him from going to Vienna. It was a fatal courtesy, which excluded him from what would have been by far the greatest opportunity of his life and deprived Austria of what *might* have changed the course of her history.

A Dutchman having been thus appointed as the League's High Commissioner in Vienna, an American, Jeremiah Smith Jnr., also like Boyden, from Boston, and a friend of his, was chosen for the next task of reconstruction in Hungary. This second enterprise was based on the model of the first, differing chiefly in that with the prestige of the Austrian success, the League was this time able to issue its loan without governmental guarantees and that the whole plan was on a somewhat smaller scale. No similar opportunity was presented with regard to the internal political situation; and the task of the High Commissioner was in the main a straight-

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forward one requiring technical competence and personal authority.

Jeremiah Smith, with very able colleagues knowing more than he could of the intricacies of Hungary's relations with other countries, was admirably fitted for the post. He was a rugged New Englander, of impeccable and transparent rectitude, and a deep, but secret, personal pride in his New England traditions and ancestry, which expressed itself in a complete indifference to ceremonies and honours. He was shy, inexpressive and with a misleading appearance of diffidence which concealed a shrewd judgement and a firm will. An incident when he first arrived in Budapest illustrates this characteristic. A League High Commissioner presented a novel puzzle for the diplomatic corps and its rules of precedence. How did he rank with the Ministers accredited to Hungary by the foreign Powers? He was not the accredited representative of a State: did he therefore rank below them? But he was the principal representative in Hungary of the League of Nations: did he therefore rank above them? There was implicit in this minor question all the rivalry between the old and the new personnel and mechanism of diplomacy. A sensible decision was taken; he was to be rated as a Minister, and like others take his precedence from his seniority in the job. But unhappily just as he went there the Minister of a great country was changed; the new Minister arrived after Jeremiah Smith and, by this rule, would walk in after Jeremiah Smith at the first official dinner after his appearance—a prospect which he showed unmistakably that he did not appreciate. What was to be done? A nervous delegation waited on Jeremiah Smith to see whether he would be ready for a generous sacrifice. He would have pleased them most, doubtless, by showing that he was making a great effort to conceal a deep disappointment and then generously offering to give way. If he had insisted firmly on his precedence, they would have been embarrassed, but would have understood. But he did neither. He laughed heartily and said he did not care a jot where he sat, and how he walked in, so long as he

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had the same dinner. It may be suspected that this light treatment of so grave a matter was felt by his visitors as a blow on their tenderest spot. Their problem was solved, but they must have left with the uncomfortable feeling that they, and their profession, and not merely the question of a place at a dinner table, had been laughed at. (All such problems are not so simply solved. The President of the Austrian Republic once gave a lunch to me in a beautiful room of the early nineteenth century in the Ballplatz. I remarked on its beauty. 'Yes,' he said, 'but have you noticed the curious feature that it has four doors? It was built specially for the Congress of Vienna because no one of the four principal foreign representatives there would walk in after the others.')

It was equally characteristic of him that he always liked his full name 'Jeremiah Smith Jnr.' to be used, the 'Junior' being a filial tribute to a father who had died many years before. The 'Jeremiah' was of course a reflection of his origin in New England, where Old Testament names are so common, and he had a similar pride in it, which he once expressed in a way characteristic both of his pride and his humour. The nomination of the High Commissioner required the assent of all the members of the Council including Hungary, which was added as a special member for Hungarian questions. All the others had given their assent, but there was a curious—and very awkward—delay in getting Hungary's. At last an embarrassed Hungarian diplomat called on me, and after much wandering round the point asked me diffidently whether Jeremiah Smith was a Jew, as his name had suggested to a Government which was not exempt from anti-Semitic prejudice. There may have been other considerations, but when I explained the traditions of nomenclature in New England, the assent was quickly forthcoming, and all was well. But when I wrote the next official report on the Hungarian plan, which would of course be widely published in Hungary, I gave his name (perhaps with some half-conscious thought of this incident) as J. Smith. He made no comment on this at

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the time. An ingenious American journalist, however, found in this an opportunity for an amusing article. It was common knowledge that we had found some difficulty in selecting a High Commissioner, and that an appointment was urgent if confidence in the scheme, and with it the success of the necessary loan issue, were not to be endangered. On this the journalist elaborated a fanciful theme. It was, he said, interesting to get a glimpse into the methods of an official confronted with a difficulty. Clearly the League felt that it was essential to publish an appointment, and had not found a man. So they took the commonest name and the commonest initial to precede it, published the name of 'J. Smith', and then looked for someone who happened to have that name: hence the choice of Jeremiah Smith. Many months later I visited the High Commissioner in Budapest. He had bided his time. With great satisfaction he brought out the newspaper cutting and said dryly, 'You see what happens when you don't give a man his proper name.' It was a retort very characteristic of very much in him.

More important in his impact upon history than any of the three of whom I have just written is a man who was completely unknown, except in a narrow circle of his associates, till long after they had passed from the scene. Harry Hopkins attracted Mrs. Roosevelt's notice by his social welfare work in New York, and she introduced him to her husband as one who might help him in his New Deal. A widower and in frail health, he gladly accepted hospitality in the White House during a sudden illness. Roosevelt found something particularly sympathetic and congenial in his mind and temperament, and admitted him to an intimacy which perhaps no one else who worked with him ever enjoyed. He stayed on, and his bedroom in the White House became his office. I have no direct knowledge of his work on America's domestic problems and met him first when the President, by a happy inspiration, sent him to London, early in 1941, to make contact with Mr. Churchill and the British war effort. The

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first picture of him was graven indelibly on the memory by years of later association.

Of rather more than middle height, with an emaciated body obviously wasted by ill-health, hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, dishevelled tow hair, and clothes hanging loosely on his shrunken form, there was in him, even at the first sight, an inner fire—at once consuming and driving. There was something in his spirit which found an instant response in Mr. Churchill's, and from then till the end of his chief's life, so soon to be followed by his own, he was a man dedicated to one purpose.

A few months later I was sent to Washington as head of the British Shipping Mission. America was then in the birth-pangs of her immense war effort, which fortunately preceded her actual entry as a belligerent. She was already the arsenal of freedom and what remained of resisting democracy. Washington was a scene of vast administrative transformation and of the indescribable confusion that accompanies such a process. We all of us found, whatever the department with which we had primarily to deal, that the frontiers of its functions were uncertain and that all the most important decisions required a higher authority—which could only be that of the President himself. No President, however, could alone deal with the problems which claimed his attention, with nothing between him and the host of Ministers, heads of departments and foreign representatives who needed his direction or his help. To all of us, certainly to all the British representatives there, whether military or civilian—and others too, Russians or Dutch or other Europeans, found the same—there was one central pivot in the vast machine: the frail, wasted figure in his office bedroom. Whenever there was a jam, a deadlock, it was to Harry Hopkins that we turned. If it was necessary to see the President, it was through him that we made the approach; and if we had won his support, we knew that the issue was already three parts won.

Amid the incredible complexity of the supply problems of the time, Hopkins had an amazing faculty for disentangling

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the main threads and keeping them firmly in his hands. I had myself to appeal to him frequently on the problems that arose from the shipping shortage. I never went to him without being amazed at the way in which, in complicated questions in which I was specialized, he had already penetrated to the essentials. But I was only one of many, and all of us had the same experience. He discerned what was vital, remembered what was essential, was quickly persuaded if your case was good, put his finger instantly on any flaw. His decision was instant, his subsequent action prompt and effective, and his influence with the President then usually decisive. You would find him in his bedroom, with the ashes and remnants of half-smoked cigarettes, and a litter of papers about him. He had always just been dealing with a quite different problem and had another just ahead of him; but if you could not get him to deliver the goods it was in all probability your own fault, or a weakness in your case. His judgement of persons, as of issues, was quick and shrewd; and it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the extent to which the cumbrous machinery of Washington administration got from him both direction and momentum.

It is illuminating to contrast his relationship to Roosevelt, with that of Colonel House to Woodrow Wilson. House was the cautious and suave diplomat, more concerned with political than administrative problems, much less direct in his methods. A friend of mine once asked him what he did when Woodrow Wilson expressed an opinion with which he did not agree. Did he put the contrary case? 'Not often,' said House. 'I listen to what he says with a noncommittal comment, wait till doubts occur to himself and then encourage them.' Harry Hopkins' opinion was always definite and, while respectfully presented, was never concealed or postponed. The difference reflects the differences in both the two Presidents and the two advisers. Yet, in the end, there was a serious breach between Wilson and House, but never a similar breach between Roosevelt and Hopkins—though it is possible that, in the later years, Hopkins' marriage (and

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consequent departure from his room in the White House), and the elaboration and consolidation of the American war machine, reduced his influence and made him less important in 1943 and 1944 than he had been in the two preceding years.

I remember numerous instances in which Harry Hopkins proved his quality and his influence, and my colleagues in other branches of the British supply organization could match them with many more. It was to him that I turned when I was unable at first to get the first batch of American ships for a hazardous military enterprise. It was on his advice that the President directed soon afterwards that the American shipping administration should, from the comparatively small merchant marine then under its control, allot two million tons to the war effort. It was he who negotiated the appointment of Lewis Douglas to the War Shipping Administration, in spite of the difficulties caused by his previous breach with the President. When I presented him with the elaborate case on which I was basing the desperate appeal for aid in replenishing British oil stocks, he put his finger on the decisive figures, asked if I would personally vouch for them, and at once promised—and gave—his full support.

Most vividly of all, however, do I remember the meeting with the President at which the crucial decision was taken to build eight million tons of merchant ships in 1942. In 1941 the output was one million. The best professional advice was that this might perhaps be multiplied by three, or at the outside by four. I had discussed the position with him fully beforehand. He was convinced, as I was, that what was wanted was eight million tons, but neither of us could as confidently judge what was practicable. We knew that, of those who were qualified and responsible, Howard Vickery (in charge of the shipbuilding section of the War Shipping Administration), was the most optimistic about America's expansive capacity. At the decisive meeting with the President there were, apart from Hopkins and myself, Vickery and his immediate chief, Admiral Land, who had great technical experience and was more cautious in assessing the prospects.

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At a well-chosen moment, when the need had been clearly demonstrated, Hopkins suggested to the President to ask Vickery what he could do. 'If you order me to build eight millions, Mr. President, I will build them,' he replied. 'Then I do so order you,' said the President. The actual output in 1942 was in fact 70,000 tons above the eight millions. It sufficed, as we had judged, for the European war. When the entry of Japan enlarged the scale of both losses and need, it was easier to enlarge the building in 1943 from eight million to nineteen than it had been to enlarge it from one to eight. It was this miraculous expansion that made possible the later Allied war effort.

From time to time when one wished to see Harry Hopkins it was not to the White House but to a hospital that one had to go; for his spells of intense work were punctuated with periods of incapacity from the wasting internal disease which seemed clearly destined to kill him, and did so when his job was done. Perhaps there was in his frailty an additional bond of sympathy with his chief, for never probably in the history of man have two men, so closely associated in a task on which man's destiny was to turn, so nobly triumphed over physical infirmity. Each lived, and died, only for the work in hand; and each in four years achieved what few have achieved in a long lifetime—the one to die in sight of the harbour, the other, so soon after, as he furled his sails and dropped anchor in the harbour itself.

Here then are four small vignettes from the crowded gallery of American portraits in my memory. How many others there are with whom I have had the particular kind of limited intimacy that grows from close association in constructive work: Raymond Stevens, George Rublee, T. W. Lamont, Paul Cravath, Raymond Fosdick, Charles Howland, Howard Vickery, Lewis Douglas—to select only a few in the chronological sequence of my association with them! It is when I turn to such memories that my hopes for the future are brighter.

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COURAGE AND IMPROVISATION

It must remain for later generations to determine the place of Franklin Roosevelt among the greatest figures of history; and contemporary appreciations must come mainly from compatriots. But the impact of his personality and policy on the future of other countries was so great that some contributions to the materials upon which an authoritative biography will ultimately be written may perhaps be made by foreign observers. There is indeed some advantage in such contributions at this moment because of the different perspective in which the foreigner necessarily regards the domestic and external aspects respectively of his policy.

My own qualifications for adding a few leaves to his laurel wreath are limited. I first met the future President in 1917 when he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, handsome and vital, in all the splendour of his youth before either the cruel disability or the greater destiny of his later life could be foreseen. Much later, when I happened to be in America at the time of his first election in 1932, I found that he was aware of what I was then writing and he invited me to spend a day with him to talk about the future. A sudden attack of influenza compelled him to cancel the appointment and an engagement to lecture in England (which I was foolish enough not to abandon) prevented a later meeting at that time; so that in the event I never actually saw him between the two wars. In the crisis of the submarine warfare, however, in 1941, Mr. Churchill asked me to represent the British Government in negotiating with America for the allocation of ships to the war effort and in putting the case for the enlargement of the

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American merchant shipbuilding programme to the maximum possible. Such a mission was obviously necessary and I believe that the suggestion as to the choice of myself to head it came from the President through the American Ambassador. In any case I met a cordial reception from him on my arrival, and found him ready to do everything that was possible and to see me whenever I wished. It is from my acquaintance with him in the three crucial years of my stay in Washington from 1941 to 1943 that my personal impressions are derived.

The first sight of him after twenty-four years showed, of course, a strikingly different figure from that of the young man of 1917. The athlete of the earlier war was now a cripple wheeled into the room or painfully supported by attendants. The black hair was now sparse and greying; the lines drawn by care and illness at once evident. But the conquest of his physical disability was more striking than its tragedy; and the first visual picture is unforgettable: the massive and majestic head; the leonine strength towering and triumphing over his crippling weakness; his gestures of glowing, exuberant, welcoming reception.

Of many qualities the most outstanding was courage—courage in every sense, physical, political, moral and social.

A sudden, crippling, irretrievable physical disaster in early manhood not only tests the character but will necessarily also develop and in some measure change it. It may break or soften the will; it may harden and strengthen it. The result may be a morose and querulous embitterment, not unwillingly parasitic; or it may be saintly resignation, a withdrawn life and a secluded occupation. Franklin Roosevelt was as far from the second of these alternatives as from the first. Sometimes, though more rarely, physical disability evokes a fierce will, a continuing inner fight, and a relentless determination to live, to the utmost limit of physical possibility, in the world of other men.

Roosevelt fought his inner fight and won. He pursued the most public of careers, and with a concentration helped by exemption from the normal distractions of

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youth. His dynamic personality, his passionate will, his inexhaustible nervous energy, seemed even to draw extra strength from a sublimation of his physical infirmity. So far from falling back upon the meditative, introspective mood of the recluse, his manner became that of an exuberant extrovert, easily accessible, informally friendly, frankly enjoying wit and humour (even the least subtle—perhaps especially the least subtle), welcoming any contest with his peers with a warrior's zest. His will was hardened and tempered by his inner struggle; his political instinct sharpened by concentration of interest on the political environment. Having fought and won the hardest fight of all, why should he fear anything which a human foe or fate itself could threaten?

If any sign remained of the inner conflict, it was not in any weakening but in a certain exaggeration of the qualities he displayed. Sometimes one seemed to detect a forced and unnatural note in his exuberance and gaiety—not so much that the mood was at the moment unreal but that it had been induced by previous effort. His apparent enjoyment of an anecdote was often more than it merited. In his easy accessibility to many who had little to offer he guarded his strength too little for what he alone could accomplish. One had, too, the impression that his manner of generous familiarity was perhaps a screen for an inner, and untouchable, reserve and an inner loneliness. Few men perhaps have been on Christian-name terms with so many and yet had so few really intimate friends. The lined and laughing face was perhaps a mask worn so long that it had become part of himself.

His moral and social courage were no less than his physical. He was by heredity and tradition an aristocrat. He was by choice a tribune of the people. His domestic policy was a long assault upon the interest, the privileges, the prejudices of his class; and his opponents were the more bitter because their assailant was one of themselves.

It is an interesting question whether a radical reformer is more helped than hindered by having himself enjoyed the privileges he attacks. Roosevelt's impelling purpose, like

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Lloyd George's in Great Britain a quarter of a century before, was to ensure and enlarge the common rights of the common man. But to inspire him he had the vision and the sympathy of the aristocrat, not the sense of burning injustice of one who had personally suffered from the privilege of others. He had the handicap as well as the advantage of his own hereditary background. But he was as immune to the reproaches of his own class as Lloyd George was to cajoleries and seductions.

No situation could well have been a better field for the display of these qualities, and of the political courage in which they found expression, than the situation which confronted the newly elected President in the early spring of 1933. For three and a half years, since the stock market crash of 1929, one country after another had suffered both economic depression and financial collapse. Disorganization of currencies, default on debts, a stoppage of world trade, had spread unemployment in every industrial country except where it was counteracted by intensive armament manufacture which brought its own even greater menace. In America prosperity was no longer 'hoovering round the corner' and the banking system of the country was breaking under the strain; one bank after the other was shutting its doors, and it looked as if few if any would escape bankruptcy.

The new President was not daunted by either the magnitude of the disaster or by the opposing views of orthodox advisers. He acted boldly, quickly, and on a large scale; and the following months reveal clearly his personality, his general outlook and the main purpose of his policy, and not less his methods.

His action comprised bank reform; a new economic policy (the New Deal); and currency manipulation. In the first of these there is general agreement that his action was wise and salutary. He not only started the banking system again, but afterwards proceeded with some much-needed permanent reforms. In the second what he did was, and remains, more

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controversial; some of his measures were admittedly mistaken and, after trial, were abandoned; much remains and the debate as to its merits will doubtless long continue. This is in the main a domestic issue, turning largely upon the special characteristics of the American economy, and I do not now propose to offer any reflections upon it. His later currency policy was, however, as important to other countries as his own, and on this some comments may be permissible, and even more upon the methods by which it was devised and pursued.

To an exceptional degree the method was the man and made his policy. His great predecessor in the first World War, Woodrow Wilson, had been inflexible not only in purpose but in method. He was academic, doctrinaire, cold and reserved, shunning contact with strong personalities around him as if to preserve the integrity of his own mind. In all these respects Roosevelt presents a complete contrast. Equally courageous and persistent in his main purpose, he was opportunist and infinitely flexible in his method. He would compromise—to achieve; he would take an indirect route—to arrive; he would stoop—to conquer. His methods were those of an uniquely skilled political organizer rather than an orderly administrator. He would gather opinions freely and widely, with perhaps a bias against rather than in favour of the expert. He was suspicious of orthodox advice, feeling that it had done little to counter, and much to cause, the disaster he saw around him. A completely new situation required, he thought, a new treatment. He believed that only by actual experiment would the right treatment be found. He preferred the method of 'trial and error'. He was by temperament, conviction, and in practice, a great 'experimenter'.

In much of what he did much could doubtless have been saved if he had accepted expert advice to 'do it this way and not that'. But he had found that more often the experts' advice was 'don't do it at all' when what he wanted was, by the standard of his own ultimate social objective, indubitably right. He was, therefore always inclined to accept the advice

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which promised the greatest and quickest result, with little regard to the eminence of the man who offered it—and then try it out; if he found it did not work, he could, he thought, give it up and try again.

The method of 'trial and error' is, however, a very expensive one in such a problem as that of a currency; and the apparent result of the experiment is liable to be seriously misleading if the field of vision of the observer is much more restricted than that of the effects of the policy. These disadvantages are well illustrated in his dollar policy.

Roosevelt saw clearly that the immediate cause of depression and unemployment was that, under the deflationary movement of the past few years, prices had fallen below costs; and that recovery was only possible if they were above them, so that there would again be an incentive to production. To bring down costs below existing prices, involving as it must a cutting of wage rates, would be slow, wasteful and politically difficult. He therefore aimed at raising prices. He had a choice of method, either that of the recognized central banking technique or by direct action on the currency. He consulted a banking authority of eminence and influence. 'Can you raise prices and if so how?' The answer was 'Yes, within limits' and the orthodox technique of 'open market' operations was explained to him. 'How much and how soon?' The answer seemed to him to promise too little and too late. He then consulted an agricultural economist with ideas of his own about currency manipulation. He was told that prices could be raised quickly and adequately by the simple and direct method of reducing the gold value of the dollar. This advice had important consequences throughout the world.

In the spring of 1933 a great international conference was convened in London to attempt to remove the main obstacles to the restoration of international trade. Mr. Cordell Hull represented the United States. It quickly became evident that an essential condition was some agreement to limit the wildly fluctuating exchange values of the different currencies, and this in turn obviously involved some limitation on the

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power of each country to tamper with its own currency. Some tentative plans were worked out and Mr. Cordell Hull consulted the President. The immediate answer was a veto upon any action which would limit the President's power to raise prices by changing the gold value of the dollar. This reply destroyed whatever chances the Conference had of success, and events in Europe proceeded inexorably upon their fatal course. The President was at the time on holiday, without access to his normal advisers, and his instructions would seem to have been sent without adequate consideration of all their probable consequences. It may be, of course, that the Conference would have failed in any case, but as it is the responsibility for its failure clearly rests with this decision. Mr. Cordell Hull at least can have been under no illusion, and returned a disappointed man.

The President proceeded with his plans. Early in the following year the statutory gold value of the dollar was reduced. Henceforth America would pay more dollars for a given weight of gold. Some increase in American dollar prices resulted, but very little—much less than the percentage by which the dollar had been devalued. For the effect was necessarily to drive down gold prices throughout the world. This inflicted a new deflation upon all the countries which had in the immediately preceding years been painfully restoring their currencies on a gold basis. It was an especially unfortunate moment for this to happen. One after the other most of the countries of Europe, which had gone through the initially painful process of re-linking their currencies to gold, had been slowly building up their trade. They were succeeding, and in the year before the dévaluation of the dollar all the economic indices showed a substantial improvement. While even the direct advantage to the American economy was less than had been hoped, it was thus secured at the expense of a greater loss to European countries, which in turn reacted to some extent adversely upon America herself.

The fact is that, in a world of currencies linked with gold, any policy which aims at changing the value of gold in

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relation to commodities is essentially one which needs to be treated internationally, not nationally. A policy of devaluation by one country is bound to have an important effect on all other gold-currency countries. If the country embarking on this policy is one, like America, which is of great importance in the world's economy, the external consequences are likely to be very serious. Indeed America could only achieve her purpose of raising her internal prices through devaluation by causing an increase in world dollar prices. And since her internal economy is greater in relation to her external trade than that of any other great country, the use of this instrument was like using a lever from the wrong end. Roosevelt had certainly not desired to inflict deflation on other countries. It was, however, the inevitable result of using an international instrument for a national purpose, of doing so in particularly unfavourable circumstances and of resorting to the experimental method in a problem for which it was especially unsuitable.

It is certainly, indeed, in the sphere of currency policy that the defects of Roosevelt's qualities, and of his 'trial and error' method, are most evident. A somewhat similar mistake was made with the other precious metal which is used as the basis of currencies, silver. To America, or to a small portion of America, silver is a mining product; to countries of the Far East, and especially China, it was the medium of exchange. The artificial raising of the price of silver, under pressure from the silver States, was of very minor importance to the economy of America; but it imposed deflation upon China and plunged the country into a new depression. Seen from China (where I was acting as a financial adviser in 1933 and 1934), the disproportion between the results of the silver policy at this time in the producing country and those in which silver was the medium of exchange was tragic indeed.

These are only, of course, the comments of a foreign observer, without inside knowledge of the domestic issues involved or of all of the reasons which led to the action taken. There is much doubtless to be argued on the other side, and

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all that then happened is not only past history but is separated from the present by much more important events. I have referred to the currency questions of 1933, not so much for their intrinsic importance, but because the way in which they were handled illustrates the 'trial and error' method of a great experimenter, which sometimes too expensively, but often with great success, was used also in a later period.

The world was soon dominated by the German menace, which became more obvious after the purge of 1934 and the subsequent murder of Dolfuss, and after the unopposed re-occupation of the Rhineland in 1936 Hitler seemed already likely, to an observer of discernment, to develop to a greater aggressive strength than the two great Western Powers of Europe could control. It was in the next decade that Roosevelt's qualities of political insight, foresight and courage, and the capacity for skilful handling of difficult political forces, were to find their supreme expression.

Roosevelt was, with Winston Churchill, one of the two men in great position who saw first, and most clearly, what Hitlerism was likely to bring, and one of the first, in his own country, to realize that America's resources would need to be thrown into the balance if freedom was to be preserved even in America. It was for over two years uncertain whether or not this could be achieved without the actual entry of America as a belligerent, and Roosevelt in 1940, as Woodrow Wilson in 1916, held out the prospect of continued neutrality. In the following year he had the extremely difficult task of giving enough help to save the Allies from disaster without crossing the line beyond which he could not rely on the support of either Congress or the American people. The country as a whole beyond question desired the Allies to win, and, especially after the fall of France and the Battle of Britain, had an intense sympathy with Britain's struggle, and increasingly desired to give what help was practicable—short of what would bring the danger of being involved as a belligerent. But public opinion had been sadly mistaught as to the character and consequences of the Treaty of Versailles,

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and isolationist, or semi-isolationist, forces were still strong. It is probable that throughout 1940, and perhaps until the actual attack on Pearl Harbour, the majority of Congress, and possibly of the nation, would have rejected any measure which seemed likely to result in war. Mr. Hoover and Colonel Lindbergh were touring and exhorting the country against unneutral action, and aid which would be regarded as unneutral by Germany—the former supporting his case by arguing that Germany was bound to lose even if America gave us no aid, and the latter by arguing that Germany was so strong that she was bound to win anyhow. This somewhat illogical basis of their united efforts did not seem to disturb them or weaken their influence. Roosevelt, undeviating in his main purpose of securing the defeat of Nazism, and an opportunist of unequalled skill in his method, went step by step, just as far as he thought he could at the moment. Each measure successfully carried through became a stepping-stone for the next, and the whole policy was timed and directed, with skilful assistance from his own speeches and talks, towards the realization by the public of the menace of Hitlerism to America herself.

I found it a fascinating experience to watch, from a point of vantage, for a time as Chairman of the North American Supply Committee in London and then as head of the British Shipping Mission at Washington, the way in which the President trod delicately along his dangerous, tortuous and difficult path. First came the 'destroyer' deal, which after some resultant shock was successfully absorbed. Then came the 'Lend-Lease' Act, the most 'unsordid' measure in financial history, as Mr. Churchill termed it. From the moment of the passage of this Act until the conclusion of hostilities, during the period of America's neutrality as of her belligerency, the goods and services supplied by one country to the other—immensely more, of course, from America to Great Britain than vice versa—were in effect supplies without charge. If, when the war was over, Great Britain was left, as she was, the only one of the Allied countries with a

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heavy financial debt to the others, this was because of her expenditure before the Lend-Lease Act and after hostilities had ceased. For the intervening period of four years the account was wiped clean with a completeness, and on a scale, to which there is no analogy in history. The facilities given for the repair of ships, including warships, the rapidly extended use allowed to be made of the new Lend-Lease provision of supplies and munitions of all kinds, the skilful and ingenious arrangements for the despatch of an American force to Iceland, were steps along the same path.

One further measure, not less ingenious, very greatly helped in the sphere of shipping and supplies with which I was myself particularly concerned. It was still illegal under the Neutrality Act, which remained in force until America became a belligerent in December, for any American ship to enter belligerent zones, these zones being defined by the President. This still left it possible to send American ships to non-belligerent zones which British ships would otherwise have to serve, or to transfer them temporarily to British flag and management. For a time assistance was given in this way, but when shipping assistance on a much greater scale became necessary, as it did in the spring of 1941, this was obviously not enough. The President then had a very ingenious idea. Suez and Alexandria were ports of Egypt, formally a neutral country. He therefore left passage up the Red Sea to them outside his definition of belligerent zones. Henceforth American ships, with the American flag and crews, could carry any form of supplies required by the large British expeditionary force in Egypt and North Africa; there was thus ample scope for all the ships America could supply.

There were of course moments when it seemed that perhaps the President might have gone a little further, or a little more quickly, without losing the support of a country which, under his leadership, was becoming rapidly more conscious of what was involved in the struggle. But no representative in America of sorely-pressed Great Britain could judge clearly in the agonizing anxiety of that time. In retrospect the skill,

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courage and inflexible purpose are evident, however gradual and tortuous the methods adopted in pursuing it. No Englishman, certainly none who was in Washington in that terrible year of 1941, can fail for the rest of his days to be humbly grateful that the occupant of the White House was then President Roosevelt, with his passionate hatred of Nazi tyranny, his unrivalled skill in threading the maze of political and legal difficulties, his matchless power in mobilizing America's resources. Aided by his intimate friend, the frail and emaciated Harry Hopkins, equal to him in courage and ardent devotion to the cause, and like him destined to be a victim of the war, he chose always the most ambitious programme, and the most constructive personality and most rapid methods to realize it.

The shipping record, with which I was myself most closely acquainted, is an illustration in one field of what he achieved in several. The American merchant fleet in the spring of 1941 was comparatively small, but within a few weeks he ordered 2,000,000 tons to be put into the war effort. For the greater part of the time between the two wars American ship-building had almost stopped—in ten years, except for some tankers, only two or three ocean-going cargo ships had been built. Though there had been some building in the late 'thirties, it was still on a comparatively modest scale—the actual output for 1941 itself was about a million tons. The general professional opinion was that it might be possible to multiply this by about three, but scarcely more, at least in any near future. There was one man, however, Howard Vickery, who had a more optimistic opinion of America's expansive capacity; and it was his opinion the President accepted. Eight million tons were ordered, and built, in 1942; and, when the scale of the war was enlarged by Japan's entry, no less than nineteen million tons in 1943. Demand the almost impossible, and you will get it, was Roosevelt's guiding principle in this as in other matters.

Roosevelt, if he had not everything, had what was essential to mobilize the full resources of America for war to the

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utmost of her potential strength. It was not done by any perfection of administrative organization at Washington. In this, indeed, the President's methods showed the defects of his qualities. The functions he assigned to different departments were often ill-defined and overlapping. The heads of two, or three, or more, departments would each claim, and with some justification, the same administrative responsibility. A new executive order giving authority to one department would be made without clearly cancelling a similar, or overlapping, authority already given to another. This sometimes gave a convenient facility of manœuvre between two or three rather difficult Ministers or officials; but it was a method more suitable to political than to administrative organization, and it necessarily led to much personal and departmental friction. Or a decision on policy would be taken rather hastily on an *ex parte* statement submitted by one department without consultation with another obviously affected by it. When the second protested, the decision might be amended without adequate consideration of its impact on the first, and so on. It was an application of the 'trial and error' method in a sphere in which it was particularly expensive in friction and waste. Committees would be hastily constituted with inadequately thought out terms of reference and would be left to dwindle into futility instead of being quickly killed when they ceased to be useful. Washington, to an official arriving fresh from a war administration which had been gradually hammered into shape by two years of war experience, had an appearance of chaos and confusion, which was liable to give a most misleading impression of what was really happening in the country. I had had the same experience in 1917, and happily when the experience was repeated remembered how surprised I had before been to find that, after two months of what seemed like time-wasting confusion at the capital, things were really moving in the great centres of production at a rapid pace and on a great scale. In truth, the mobilization of America's resources does not depend only upon departmentalism in Washington.

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General instructions on policy are of course required from there, and administrative confusion there does of course entail some waste and delay; but, within the scope and direction of general policy, the great bulk of practical organization goes on elsewhere. What is required above all is inspiration, leadership, broad policy and determination in pursuing it, in the Chief Executive of the State. All these Roosevelt provided supremely. The dynamic personality, the passionate will, the seemingly inexhaustible nervous energy, the bold and ambitious conception, at the centre of power, were immensely more important than detailed administrative defects; and they achieved the miracle of America's production, and the creation, in three years, of the most mighty armed force the world has ever seen.

The fact is, though it is not easy for one with the professional deformation of a civil servant to acknowledge, that there are considerable disadvantages in starting a war with an organization elaborately and completely organized for the quite different tasks of peace. It is not easily adaptable, and its very efficiency, and the trained competence and professional pride of its officials, make adaptation, and the absorption into positions of adequate authority of those with indispensable experience from outside, more difficult. Some confusion at the start is not too big a price to pay for the fluidity and elasticity in organization which the novel problems of a war of an unanticipated character require. The results in America were perhaps better on the whole after six months than if, from the beginning, the administration had been apparently more adequate for its task. The very defects helped improvisation and decentralization, both of which were essential for the full mobilization of resources through so vast a country.

It was Roosevelt's destiny first to effect greater social and economic changes in his country than any of his predecessors, and then to be the greatest of war leaders; to bring his nation out of the slough of despond, and then out of the valley of the

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shadow. He died on the crest of victory and on the eve of embarking on the third great venture of his life, that of leading the world in the creation of a peace system—which would perhaps have been the most difficult of all his great tasks. He died a little before, and not like Woodrow Wilson a little after, the end of the war in which he had been a main architect of victory. To history, and perhaps for himself, he was, by comparison, *felix opportunitate mortis*. We may well regret that he should not have gathered the fruits of his victory—and had the chance of succeeding in the ultimate purpose in which Woodrow Wilson so tragically failed. But it was he, as history will recognize, who made success possible for those who followed him. He paid the price for his work, as Wilson did, with his life. But his heart was not broken before the end.

There are spots on the sun. If we will know the whole truth, they must not be ignored, though it needs darkened and strong glasses to perceive them. But what are sun-spots to the race of men who draw life, and happiness, and strength from the radiance of the sun itself?

IMPRESSIONS FROM FRANCE

It is painful, but salutary, for those of us who took part in the embittered controversy that followed the first world war as to policy towards Germany, to recall and re-examine the views we then held, in the light of subsequent events. We may still believe, as I do, that in the first years after the war Great Britain was right, as against France, in striving to limit the demand for reparations to a definite and practicable total; and to increase the Weimar Republic's chances of transforming Germany into a democratic and pacific state by a magnanimous policy of conciliation and concession. But in retrospect we shall nearly all, I believe, come to the conclusion that those who stood for this policy continued to advocate it long after it had become impracticable and dangerous. It was not only in 1938 that what may have been at first wise conciliation had become fatal 'appeasement' of a country whose course was irrevocably set. It was not, indeed, only in 1936, when the neutralized Rhineland was invaded that resistance, not concession, was needed. The date from which a firmer policy was appropriate was earlier than this, earlier perhaps in the light of later evidence even than the advent of Hitler to power in 1933. As to how much earlier, and whether the British policy could have been successful if French co-operation could have been secured from the first, we may still be doubtful. But we shall all of us, I think, now look with a different eye on the protagonists of French policy at the time, especially Clemenceau and Poincaré, and feel the need for a new reassessment in Anglo-Saxon thought of their place in the inter-war evolution of European history.

The stature of Clemenceau in particular grows in the perspective of later events. Maynard Keynes' classic

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description at the Peace Conference, through which he is best known in Great Britain and America, is both incomplete and unjust. Clemenceau can be better seen in his self-revealing apophthegms and perhaps best of all in his great book *Grandeurs et Misères d'une Victoire*. He was the incarnate will of France to win and to reap the fruits of victory. As inflexible as Woodrow Wilson, he had a narrower range of vision and ambition, a more concentrated purpose, and a certain cynical realism, which withered both idealism and illusions. But, if cynical, he was not inhumane nor, by the standard of contemporary or succeeding spokesmen of France, immoderate in his demands. Those who regard him as the apostle of a Carthaginian peace will do well to read his passionate controversy with Foch and Poincaré who had wished to impose an alien domination on the Germans of the Rhineland. If he was obsessed during the Conference by the menace of a resurgent Germany, his apprehensions have been justified by what has happened since. I shall, however, now attempt no general assessment of his policy or place in history but only contribute a few personal impressions and anecdotes.

Clemenceau was of tougher material, physical, mental, moral, than any of the statesmen of his time. I remember that in the course of the Peace Conference—he was seventy-seven years of age at the time—he found that his officials were unable to settle some tiresome point with the British Treasury. He said he would go to London himself and ordered a destroyer. There was a winter gale in the Channel and he was thrown heavily against the side of the ship. He did his business and returned. When he got back to Paris, and only then, he said, 'You'd better get a doctor: I've broken a rib.' About the same time he was shot by a would-be assassin; the bullet stayed in him till the end of his days. I saw him shortly afterwards, presiding over a meeting of the 'Big Four'. He looked more like a corpse than a living person: but he had a complete mastery of the meeting.

The tales told of him usually reflect a caustic wit with a

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distinctive flavour all its own. When there was an attempt to steer a way between the rival claims for the Presidency of the Republic by choosing a nonentity, a particular person whom it would be unkind to name was for a time canvassed widely. But people began to say that really he was too stupid. This came to the candidate's ears and he illustrated the truth of the charge by complaining to his old colleague Clemenceau, '*On dit que je suis trop stupide: après tout je ne suis plus stupide qu'un autre.*' '*Quel autre?*' was the merciless answer. He had no illusions about his colleagues in his own Cabinet. 'Why should it be my fate to have as my Minister of Finance the only Jew in France who knows nothing of finance?' Asked why he did not get Ministers of better quality, he replied, 'Geese, not eagles, saved the Capitol.' When he started on his eastern travels after being rejected himself for the Presidency, he stopped in Egypt and, seeing the crocodiles on the Nile, his remark was, 'How they remind me of politicians in Paris: they open their mouths so wide.' Arrived in India he was shown the vast new Baker-Lutyens buildings at New Delhi and stood silently gazing at them for a time. 'What do you think of them, Monsieur le Président?' asked the British officer accompanying him. 'What a magnificent ruin they will make!'

These anecdotes of course illustrate only one side of his character. At the heart of it was a passionate patriotism, shown throughout his long life, and a capacity for a *saeva indignatio* against injustice, best illustrated by his intervention in the Dreyfus case. With a relentless concentration on his purpose he fought all who opposed it with ferocity. At the same time he was capable of the deepest emotion and the tenderest sentiment—especially for the *poilu* sent into battle for France. The favourite respite for this old man in the middle seventies from the intense labours and anxieties of his war leadership was to go to the front and mix with the soldiers in the trenches. On one such visit a *poilu* was hit mortally in front of his trench; Clemenceau scrambled up and went to the lad's side, who as he died tore up a few

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violets and gave them to his chief with last words of devotion to him and to France. The old man embraced him with tears and said, 'These violets shall be with me till I die.' They were found, carefully cherished, at his death eleven years later.

But the old 'Cabinet-breaker' was a fierce fighter and a fierce hater. Of the two other French statesmen to whom I will turn next it is evident that he hated Poincaré and despised Briand. Poincaré was, with some interruptions, the dominant political power in France in the years which immediately preceded the first World War and in the decade that followed it. The crucial issue of policy between Great Britain and France, on which turned the immediate fate of Germany and ultimately perhaps the future peace of the world, might be suitably dramatized in the clash of two personalities, his and Lloyd George's. The clash of temperament between the Celt of genius and the rigid, precise, stubborn Lorrainer was as great as between the two national policies for which they stood; and public controversies were further exacerbated by intense mutual personal dislike. The deadlock was not relieved till Lloyd George was replaced by Bonar Law in 1922 and Poincaré by Briand in 1924. Lloyd George, though handicapped by his electoral appeal in 1918 and by the new Parliament of that year, devoted his efforts to limiting German reparation to a moderate and clearly defined total, and to a policy of conciliation designed to give the new Weimar Republic the best possible chance of converting Germany into a pacific and truly democratic country. Poincaré was from the first completely sceptical of any such policy. He was opposed to the retention of the Rhineland by Germany. He bitterly, and not unnaturally, resented the fact that the provision of the Treaty of Versailles, which secured the Rhineland for Germany, remained irrevocable although the consideration which had induced France to accept it, the promise of a pact of guarantee by the U.S.A. and Great Britain, was not fulfilled. He attempted to secure, by an externally provoked movement of separation from within the Rhineland, a reversal of the Treaty decision. He

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was determined, at least, to exploit to the full every clause of the Treaty which justified either the greatest payment of reparation or occupation in case of default. His occupation of the Ruhr, on the ground or pretext of a failure of coal deliveries, had the double purpose of exacting more reparation and of reducing the potential strength of Germany, and of the two motives the second was probably the more important in his mind. His policy was reversed in the French Election of 1924, when the electorate voted against 'Poincaré-la-guerre', and put his great rival and opponent Briand into office. But he dominated French policy long enough, with his further term of office from 1926 on, to destroy the chances, if they ever existed, of establishing the strength of the Weimar régime by concessions. His return to a dominant influence over French foreign policy was an incidental result of his recall to office to deal with the *dégringolade* of the French franc, and of the great prestige which he naturally acquired by the successful solution of that problem.

On the actual issue of policy most Englishmen, reviewing the course of events in retrospect, and in the light of later evidence and developments, will probably either modify their original views or retain them, as I do, with somewhat greater diffidence and with at least greater respect for Poincaré's opposing point of view. My present purpose, however, is only to appreciate and illustrate his personal characteristics as they affected the history of the time.

Poincaré was the first President of the Reparation Commission in Paris in 1920, and I was its first General Secretary. Sitting by him day by day and working closely with him and his principal collaborators, I had an opportunity of studying his personality from close quarters. He was certainly one of the most remarkable men I have ever known in public affairs. Within the range of his knowledge and interests, his mind was the most perfect frictionlessly working machine I have ever seen. His knowledge was vast and detailed, his memory impeccable, his industry superhuman. Every fact he knew (one is inclined to say 'ever

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knew') was classified and docketed in his mind, ready for immediate use. His mental reactions were instantaneous and precise. He is the only man I have ever known who, at any moment, on any subject within his wide range, could make a speech, logically developed, exact in phrasing, fortified with every fact and figure, which could be taken down in shorthand and reprinted without revision in the most exacting quarterly magazine or official report. The rapidity of his mind was no less striking. I could feel acutely, as I sat beside him, his mental agony as one or another member on the Commission began a lengthy, and more or less woolly, argument. Poincaré knew the general policy which he was going to advocate before he began; he knew the end of each sentence after the first two words; he discerned the general course of the argument after the first two minutes; and then he had to sit in controlled misery while the theme was slowly unfolded for another quarter of an hour. His *Chef de Cabinet* told me that when he looked through the shorthand reports of his speeches in the French Chamber before they went to the printer he never needed to revise a word; they were always as precise in grammar and phrasing as in their facts and figures. He also told me of a very characteristic bit of office technique. Most Ministers like an oral exposition of the questions on which they have to give decisions, as a supplement, if not a substitute, for a written document. Not so Poincaré. No secretary or adviser could ever state a case as quickly as Poincaré could grasp it. He demanded each day a written list of every question for decision, with a space for him to write a '*Oui*' or '*Non*' or other terse and final comment. This too had the advantage, which he always sought, of entailing the least possible personal contact with anyone.

His industry was phenomenal; his nervous strength apparently inexhaustible. Despatches were placed before him from every Minister, from innumerable officials, from Ambassadors or Consuls all over the French Empire. He apparently read them all and forgot nothing. He was once

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posed with a problem which, for a moment, but only for a moment, seemed to baffle him. His doctor told him that he really must take some exercise. What could he do? He played no game, enjoyed no sport, hated to walk. He hated above all things boredom and waste of time, and each of these forms of exercise meant both. He found a characteristic solution. He arranged to be massaged—in such a posture as would allow him to read his official papers during the process. He was accustomed each week-end, after six days of long hours and intensive work in his office, to go into his constituency in the country, drive over bumpy roads all Sunday and deliver a long speech at each stopping place. One of his colleagues, Henri de Jouvenel, who sometimes accompanied him on these occasions told me that he once attempted to remonstrate. ‘You have been motoring all day for eleven hours and making as many speeches. I, who am many years younger than yourself (Poincaré was over sixty at the time), am absolutely worn out though I’ve had nothing to do except sit in the car with you. Aren’t you tired?’ ‘Tired,’ said Poincaré, ‘I’ve heard people say they’re tired, but I don’t know what it is. I’ve never been tired.’

He was indeed a tireless, perfect machine, as efficient for the definite task, as unadaptable for any other, as cold and as inhuman. Short, spare and wiry, grey and dapper in appearance, he was in manner formal and precise; courteous and correct but never genial; meticulous, pedantic, legalistic and frigid. Even when he most desired to be hospitable the first sensation on meeting him was a chill down the spine. His incisive and precise speech killed all conversation except argument. His manner killed all emotions except respect or anger. His own deep feeling on public issues was under an iron control, which I only knew to have once been broken. It was when a French ex-official of the Reparation Commission, who had later become a Deputy, attacked his policy in the Chamber and used information he had acquired in his former office. Then Poincaré’s control suddenly broke and he was only with difficulty restrained by those near him

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from physical assault. The passion which so rarely escaped only gave at other times a kind of cold ferocity to his argument.

The well-known aphorism of Lloyd George, 'Poincaré knows everything and understands nothing; Briand understands everything and knows nothing,' is not quite accurate, though it throws an illuminating light on all the three men concerned, and their reactions to each other. It would be more correct to say that Poincaré had a vast store of exact knowledge, and understood what he knew so far as it could be understood without illumination from what was outside it. What he did not know exactly, he did not know at all. For him it did not exist. His facts and his ideas were like sharp flints, gathering no moss, susceptible to no external impact, cutting through all the softer matter they encountered. For him a gold mark was a gold mark, and whatever affected the value of the actual German mark was merely irrelevant or an example of Germany's perfidy and intrigue. The Treaty gave France the right to so many gold marks and these he would have; if not he would take in military occupation, and therefore in extra security for France, what he failed to get in cash; he was a lawyer with his brief and would not look beyond it. Impeccable in personal integrity, austere and un-exacting in his own life, he was a patriot Shylock, exacting for his country the last ounce of flesh and blood, whatever the consequences for his relations with his Allies or the ultimate future of Europe and the world.

All these characteristics were expressed in his Ruhr policy and in his attendant negotiations with his Allies. Those who defend his action—and there are probably more Anglo-Saxons who would do so now than there were at the time—say with some justice that neither Germany, nor indeed Great Britain and America, could have been induced to modify their previous attitudes sufficiently to make possible the Dawes settlement (which at least gave France some reparation and provided Europe with a few years' respite

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from chaos, though at a tremendous ultimate cost), unless France had given an unquestionable demonstration both of her strength and her determination. '*Il fallait passer par là.*' But if Poincaré could create the conditions for a settlement favourable to France he could not himself settle. He could achieve a strong bargaining position, but he could not then bargain; he was as uncompromising, and with similar consequences, as Woodrow Wilson in his very different policy. One of his ablest and closest collaborators, M. Seydoux, once said to me, 'There is no one like Poincaré for getting up steam in the engine, but he can't stop at the platform.'

Such was Poincaré; formal, frigid, unmagnetic; an exact, scrupulous, and conscientious lawyer; pursuing his course like a horse with blinkers who sees clearly ahead, but looks neither to right nor left. This was the man who was President of the French Republic in the fatal year 1914; who overthrew Briand when he was at the Conference of Cannes in 1921; who broke the Bankers' Committee and with it all hope of an early settlement of reparations in 1922; who entered the Ruhr in the following January; who after being beaten in 1924 returned in 1926 to restore the French currency, to reverse or hamper M. Briand's policy of Locarno and Geneva; who witnessed before he fell in 1929 the onset of the great world depression, from which such momentous results were to follow after his retirement from public life and his death in 1980.

Briand, his great rival and opponent at home as Lloyd George was across the Channel, was as different from Poincaré in person, temperament, policy, talents and methods of work as it is possible for two men to be. Stout, stooping, careless in dress, lazy or lethargic in body and in mind, except when roused by a great occasion; he had flair, without profound knowledge; magnetism without industry; eloquence without exactitude. Though his early record would certainly have suggested no such later destiny, he became the apostle of conciliation with Germany, of friendship with Great Britain, of the internationalism of Locarno, the Pact of

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Paris, the League of Nations, and the United States of Europe. He was perhaps the greatest orator of his day. Lloyd George may have had a more magnetic appeal to a popular audience of his own country, but he could not cast an equal spell upon hardened official delegates at an Assembly of many nations. Viviani had perhaps a more beautiful voice than any living orator, and used it with an unmatched technical skill; but his arguments were usually more persuasive when they were imperfectly understood, when the audience allowed themselves to be lulled into uncritical acceptance by the sensuous pleasure of listening to a form of music unequalled of its kind. Mr. Churchill's time was still to come; he was to prove superior in inspiring phrase and in wit, but at his height his eloquence was that of one who was even more a man of action than an orator; it had flashes from the facets of a diamond rather than a blend of sonorous voice and personal magnetism. His eloquence was the flower of a personality, great in itself and in action, greater than any oral expression of it. Briand, however, was essentially and above all the orator, greater when he spoke than when he framed or executed his policy. The verdict on his statesmanship will depend upon history's judgement of the whole of the international policy with which his name is associated, as its advocate rather than its originator. The sincerity of his convictions seemed unquestionable when he spoke, and in his later years even at other times; though he seemed rather a late convert to a religion than one who had at last found the opportunity to give expression to long matured convictions. At least, however, from the time of his close association with the League he was a consistent and powerful supporter of the policies of pacification and conciliation.

As an orator he was supreme. His sonorous and musical bass (in contrast with Viviani's tenor) was a perfect medium for the emotions and ideas he wished to convey, and it gave a depth to the French language which, with all its glitter and brilliance, it usually lacks with other speakers. In great

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crises he felt as deeply as he spoke, and transmitted what he felt in an unmistakably responsive sympathy with his audience; all his art and oratory seemed, too, to reflect an underlying wisdom, political insight and a core of reasoned policy, and was illumined by flashes of wit. His relationship with those who heard him was a reciprocal one; he took from them as well as gave to them, and he was at his best when speaking to an intelligent, and responsible, audience. He spoke without notes or verbal preparation, inspired as he proceeded by the responsive enthusiasm around him. Like other great orators he seemed to grow, even in physical stature, as he spoke, his massive figure and shaggy leonine head, hunched and bowed as he began, acquiring majesty with the development of his theme. No one who heard it will ever forget his speech of welcome to the Assembly for Herr Stresemann, when Germany entered the League. His audience, international and responsible, was deeply sensible of the historic importance of the occasion (which indeed seemed much greater at the time than it proved to be a little later), and out of their collective emotion he drew an inspiration which raised his eloquence to its supreme height. He was carried then to the limit of what the occasion and his audience demanded, without overstepping it into excess or anti-climax.

There were indeed times, though this was not one, when he was carried too far by the impetus of his own oratory and the response of his listeners. I remember the time when he rose in the Assembly to defend the French occupation of the Ruhr. He argued eloquently, and with the visible sympathy of a large proportion of his audience, that France's intention was essentially pacific. His success inspired him to elaborate his theme further than he had probably intended. He gave a brief résumé of the general course of French history, which seemed increasingly strange to those who had not under the spell of his oratory forgotten all the wars of France, and summed it all up in the phrase, '*En effet, la France c'est la paix.*' I was so interested myself that I sent

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for the verbatim copy of the text which was to be inserted in next morning's official report. But the French Delegation had been before me. The passage I wished so much to read was represented by a blank. There was left only what he had intended to say, before the spell of his own oratory carried him to the further flights of imagination which would hardly win as much sympathy from the reader as from the listener. More commonly, however, his speeches remained powerful and persuasive even when they were read without the compelling influence of his person and presence. He had magnetism, as every great orator has, but it was not merely physical or facile; it had an intellectual quality and an appeal to the deepest emotions that are intertwined with genuine convictions.

Briand died in March 1932 and was given a public funeral by the French Government. As the procession passed along the Champs Elysées another, and very different, man who had in his day occupied a position of power and fame which equalled that of a Prime Minister, lay dead by his own hand in the bedroom of a Paris apartment. I will here describe the scene as it was told to me at first hand by a French friend who witnessed it, because, though it has perhaps little relevance except the coincidence of dates and places, it not only reflects the mutability of human fortunes, but throws an incidental sidelight on the psychology of French officials. Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish financier, was by far the most remarkable of the adventurers of the inter-war period. With great financial and intellectual ability he combined adventurous courage and astonishing constructive genius; it was only discovered after his death that some of his most ambitious schemes were founded, at least in their later stages, on fraud. He built up a vast match-making concern and extended its markets with the aid of large loans to the Governments of a number of smaller countries who gave concessions in return. These financial operations were on an immense scale and the loans were in some cases a substantial

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factor in the national finances of the countries concerned. They were interdependent and interlocking. Together, while the conditions were favourable, they gave him an immense fortune and a personal power perhaps never equalled by any individual financier holding no official position; but they were so related that serious disaster anywhere might bring the whole vast structure crumbling down. I do not know whether the system could in any case have been kept going indefinitely, or whether an element of fraud had in fact begun to creep in at an early stage. But when the world economic depression was followed by a general financial collapse, it was inevitable that some of Kreuger's principal debtors should default and that this should undermine his general financial stability and that of all the ventures dependent on him. Many of these were essentially remunerative in themselves. Many of the loans were also sound, under normal world conditions, and genuinely constructive in character, comparing very favourably in this respect with the loans issued by many of the principal issuing houses in the world, and indeed with some directly sponsored or encouraged by Governments. Kreuger was faced with the prospect of an immediate crash (which might be permanently averted if he could tide over the immediate future by securing new money and if the world was successful in finding an early solution to the general crisis). But he had no collateral sound enough at the time to enable him to get the new money he required. His personal prestige was very high, his good faith unquestioned, but this would not suffice if he disclosed his real position. In these circumstances he resorted to fraud and forgery, and was the better able to do so because his reputation stood so high that the great and reputable financial house to which he applied omitted the normal precautions which would have been automatically taken in the case of a humbler borrower. He succeeded at the moment and all went apparently well through the winter of 1931. But he himself knew the facts; he knew by March 1932 that the world crisis was not going to end quickly; and he knew that in these

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circumstances disclosure, disgrace and imprisonment were inevitable. He therefore shot himself in Paris. His reputation was still unsmirched by rumour. Even the knowledge that he had committed suicide raised no immediate doubts. His death was mourned as the loss of a main pillar in the weakened financial structure of the world.

On the day of his death a French friend of mine, a representative of the financial house whom he had successfully deceived, had some business to discuss with him. He called for the purpose at Kreuger's apartment, entered and, receiving no reply, opened the bedroom door and found a suicide with the lethal weapon beside him. He rushed to the telephone to call for the police. But the Paris police were that day occupied with the arrangements for Briand's funeral. My friend was only able to get a stolid old French police officer, who took the news with infuriating calm. 'Oh yes,' he said, 'one more poor devil has done away with himself. All right. I'll deal with it in due course.' My friend tried vainly to impress on him that this was not the ordinary Morgue case, but did at last induce him to come along. When the police officer saw the body, he repeated—and continued to repeat—his indifferent comment, 'Yes, oh yes, one more poor devil,' etc. My friend had no success in trying to persuade him that this was a death which would shake the world, that the Government must at once be informed, that all sorts of action must at once be taken. He was met by the same imperturbable stolidity and promise of no more than the customary routine. Looking round the room in desperation, however, my friend saw a half-open drawer, with a gleam of red and gilt within. He went over and found Kreuger's decorations, including a Legion of Honour. He took it out and showed it. 'Oh,' said the police official in a new tone of respect and awe, '*C'est un décoré.*' Thereafter matters were suitably arranged. It was not because Kreuger was a man whose death would shake the financial centres of the world, and even Governments, but because he had a Legion of Honour. Such is sometimes the

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official mind, and perhaps rather especially the mind of the minor French official.

The incident which I have just recorded is a trivial example of a rather interesting, and in some of its aspects quite important, difference between the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin attitude towards official persons and things. And as the main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate some of the special characteristics of the French, I will allow myself a few discursive remarks at this point.

With all the subsequent disrepute of French political and public life, there remains from the period of Louis XIV's European supremacy a formal respect for the official, for the official conference, person, or decoration, irrespective of the quality and character of the individuals concerned. The Catholic has often found it necessary to preserve his respect for a Pope *quâ* Pope without necessarily cherishing any illusions as to the personal quality of the holder of the office at a given moment. Latin logic makes the distinction easier for him than for the Anglo-Saxon, who usually arrives at a *mélange* of qualified respect, in which everything that excites his admiration or blame, power, riches, office, personal qualities, are blended together. On the whole the Englishman thinks rather more highly of men as men if they hold political or official position, and thinks of any particular office or honour at any moment in connection with the person holding it. So it is with varying pursuits and talents. He does not keep official position, or success in industry, or eminence in literature or the arts, or prowess in sport, in completely separate departments; or differentiate very clearly between the admiration he allots to each. He will, for example, think rather more, not less, of a Minister even as a Minister, if he is good at tennis or golf. From the Frenchman's point of view the Englishman mixes his drinks. I once went with a Frenchman to an English military tattoo, which finished, to the English audience quite appropriately, with the doxology. My friend was bewildered: 'I understand military

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affairs,' he said, 'and also religion. But why do you mix the two?'

Nothing reflects so well the distinctive psychology of different nations as their sense of humour. I was once in a small group composed equally of French and English, when the conversation turned on this subject. A Frenchman, who had been asserting that the sense of humour was very different in the two countries, and who knew England well, said he would illustrate the point. He drew from his pocket a newspaper cutting of an announcement that a member of the Royal Family had just joined a well-known Golf Club. It ended with the words: 'It is understood that Her Royal Highness will play on the course when the state of her public engagements permits.' He read it out quite objectively. At once every Englishman present stared at him uncomprehendingly. 'What about it?'; and every Frenchman burst into laughter. There was something about the formal balancing of royal position, official duties, and a game of golf, that appealed irresistibly to their sense of humour. I well remember too the moment when I found I had lived long enough in France to catch something of the French point of view. It was in the year 1920. Mr. Harry Forster (Lord Forster) had just been appointed Governor-General for Australia. I opened my *Times* and found a short leader on the appointment. It started by stating correctly that the new Governor was one of the best batsmen of his time, and said with equal truth that his appointment would be popular in England and Australia. It proceeded with a recital of his more notable achievements on the cricket field. It then concluded by remarking that he had also had quite a creditable administrative career. At that point I found myself bursting into involuntary, and doubtless by the writer unintended, laughter. And I realized that living in Paris had had its effect on me.

It was amusing to notice, as another instance of the same difference, the instinctive distaste with which the French noticed the more informal manners, such as smoking in an

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official commission, which the Anglo-Saxons brought in at the many smaller meetings of the inter-war period. I remember an English Chairman of a Financial Committee at the Cannes Conference who came in late, having kept the committee waiting for him for about a quarter of an hour, and who, in apologizing, said blandly, as if it were an obviously sufficient explanation, that he had been finishing a close game of tennis. He appeared quite unconscious of the emotions in the minds of those who heard him. A little later, at the same Conference, there was a striking example of the importance this difference of outlook may have. Briand, who was not characteristically French in formality, and who was temperamentally akin to Lloyd George, walked round a golf course with him. Poincaré at Paris was engaged in trying to unseat Briand. He found the report of the golf course incident a decisive weapon in his attack. It was already too much that the French representative, instead of preserving the correct formality of a duellist, should allow himself to be drawn into informal conversation with his antagonist, but that this should be on a golf course—*c'était trop*. Briand fell. It is incredible that even his bitterest opponent should have been able to use such an incident against Lloyd George in England.

The three great Frenchmen of whom I have been talking in this chapter—though Briand less than the other two—exemplify between them many of the qualities which have given France her greatness and have also so often been a source of irritation to the statesmen of other countries, especially Anglo-Saxon.

The French, like the Greeks, and unlike the Anglo-Saxons, have a horror of *τὸ ἀπειρον*, the 'limitless' and unknowable. They long for what is definite and lucid. They want to see clearly all that is in their range of vision, express it in rational and intellectual terms, and what they cannot see and state clearly in this way they prefer to shut out altogether and ignore. They fear and distrust the Anglo-Saxon's tentative, instinctive, 'illogical' approach to political problems, an

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approach which draws something of racial and instinctive wisdom from experience which he can never clearly formulate. I once took the chair for André Siegfried when he was lecturing on the differences of French and English. He said that to the Frenchman everything that was real and true in life can and should be analysed intellectually and stated in logical terms. It was an offence against human reason to proceed to conclusions in any other way. If there was anything more in the subconsciousness, it should be dug out and subjected to the same process, or it should be firmly suppressed and ignored. He contrasted the Englishman's point of view. He said he was reluctantly compelled to recognize that the English did in fact seem, in the light of later events, to be able to reach a kind of truth and wisdom by a different process; they seemed to have some kind of contact with nature through some other channel than reason. He surmised, only half in jest, that it was perhaps the Englishman's love of animals and gardens that gave him his privilege of communion with nature. He seemed to think it unfair.

The French have similarly little interest in people or things that are outside their normal horizon. The distresses of unknown millions starving or oppressed in China or Africa evoke none of the great humanitarian movements and the popular benevolence that are so distinctive of America and Great Britain. This does not mean that they are ungenerous, but that they prefer to give to what they know and for an end they can clearly see. A Frenchman would sooner finance a young artist through his period of study, than spend his money in contributions to charitable aid to people he has never seen. To him general charity seems sentimentality, characteristic of the indefiniteness of the Anglo-Saxon mind. So too he has little general *bonhomie*, does not make numerous and superficial friendships, does not easily invite strangers to his home; but once admitted to friendship, the foreigner will find a loyalty and stability in the relationship not often equalled elsewhere.

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Compromise and conciliation are not easy for his temperament and his clear-cut mind. He is likely to contend as hard for what is trivial as for what is important. If he has strength to prevail, he will exploit his advantage, without care to lay up some goodwill for the future by a margin of restraint. If he must yield, he will: but it is likely to be rather the breaking of a rigid stick than the bowing of a pliant and resilient reed. He calculates his chances coolly and intelligently. Much of the history of the last thirty years is the better understood if we have these characteristics in mind. A Frenchman knew in 1921 that he had an invincible superiority of strength—and equally that it could not last. He knew in 1940 that he was weaker than his enemy, and yielded with a lesser contribution to his ultimate liberation than if, like the Briton of that period, he had not known when he was beaten. And more than the average man of any other country he is, for good and ill alike, an individualist, critical, resistant to mass opinion, to discipline, without the psychology that facilitates corporate and collective action—in this respect at the opposite extreme to the German, the Englishman being halfway between the two. Cross a few yards from a Swiss village, with its cottages extremely trim and neat and flowers in the central square, to a French village, with untidy public places and cottages extremely squalid, hoarding whatever they have of ornaments and amenities for those within the walls. Or look at a Paris taxi rank; you can pick your taxi, with no fear that the driver will tell you you must take the one at the front of the row. The worst of France is seen in what she does collectively; the best in the achievements and the qualities of her individual citizens. In great crises the French will improvise and act together; but at other times organization is difficult—less for lack of organizers than of an organizable public.

In the individual, precision, intelligence and individualism have both their irritating and their attractive aspects. There is nothing to equal the polished discourtesy of a Frenchman, when that is his mood. Sitting in a car, I asked a French

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official if he would kindly hand my papers to another who had to deal with them as I passed the frontier. 'Monsieur,' he replied, 'either you must be deranged, or I must be deranged: I prefer that you should be deranged.' And at the conclusion of a quarrel between two taxi-drivers, what could equal the incisive wit of the parting shaft, 'Good-bye, Monsieur, and give my compliments to *mademoiselle votre mère*'—how different from the Anglo-Saxon equivalent! But above all how *civilized* is the Frenchman, and Frenchwoman, of every class. There can be no nation where the standard of intelligence, of articulate expression, is so high and so general. Once, during the first world war, I had occasion to stay a night at an hotel in Rouen. When the chambermaid brought in the hot water I asked her how people were getting on in the city under war conditions. She replied at once, 'We get on fairly well. But there are disadvantages in living under a double administration, a British military administration and a French civil administration—especially when the British use the same siren warning to indicate to us that German planes are coming as the French do to indicate that they are going.' Witty, epigrammatic, incisive, with a lesson in administrative co-ordination, all instantaneous and in a few words—where else would this be possible?

No Anglo-Saxon needs to be reminded of what the distinctive qualities of his own race can contribute to the basic framework of world order without which civilization is impossible; but for civilization itself how infinitely poorer the world would be without the distinctive contribution and influence of France. What Englishman who has returned after living in France and is not blind and deaf to what is imperfect in himself can ever afterwards recall the quick and luminous wit, the *fin* quality of the conversational interchanges, the professional ardour and integrity of the scholars, above all the alert and exact intelligence of all manner of men and women—without occasionally experiencing some distaste at home for the familiar blend of sentiment and muddled thinking, for the fumbling speech which so often

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straddles the idea it is trying to express as a battleship searches its target—four wides before a hit—without nostalgia for all he has left?

The characteristics of Anglo-Saxon and Latin are complementary. The differences which make association so difficult are those which make it so essential. It is the blend of both, in wisdom, intelligence, experience and culture, which constitutes Western civilization. Europe, and the world, would suffer an incomparable loss if either should ever perish.

SOME IMPRESSIONS FROM CHINA

I have twice been to China on missions of a few months to give advice on financial and economic questions. So short a time cannot, of course, be expected to give more than superficial impressions of a country and a civilization so different from anything in the West. On the other hand work of this kind does give intimate contact with many of the leading personalities of a country and a specially useful angle of vision for some of the more important of its problems. And one of the impressions left by such visits is that long residence in an insulated foreign settlement at Shanghai or elsewhere may give no more, or even less. I recall a conversation with some of the principal British residents in Shanghai in the spring of 1931. They had long been engaged in business there and had taken a leading part in the municipal government of the Settlement. But in some respects their estimate of the forces then developing seemed, in comparison with what could be seen from London or Geneva, to suffer rather than gain from the peculiar combination of proximity and insulation. After lunch I was embarrassed by the direct question, 'What do you think, as a visitor, of our future?' Pressed to reply frankly, I said, 'I doubt whether you will be here in ten years' time.' 'Surely,' they said, 'you exaggerate our difficulties with the Chinese; they are disturbing, but not so serious as that.' They were startled and shocked—they would have been less so if the conversation had been nine months later—when I said, 'Oh, I'm not thinking of the Chinese. It is the Japanese who, I believe, will drive you out.' Well, they were still there after ten years—but not after eleven. They are now coming back—with a difference. The Japanese are no longer there: the Chinese are stronger. I will not now attempt another prophecy.

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The most remarkable ruling family, not only in China but in the modern world, are the Soongs, with those whom they have married. Of the children of a Cantonese bible-seller, one daughter married the founder of the Chinese Republic, Sun Yat-sen; one is married to the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek; one to H. H. Kung, for so many years China's Finance Minister; and their brother, T. V. Soong, at different periods Finance Minister and Prime Minister, has for many years been one of the most notable figures in both national and international politics. For nearly a quarter of a century this family has been at the centre of the Chinese scene.

I never met the widow of Sun Yat-sen. Reputed to be a woman of exceptional beauty both of person and character, she has long been alienated from her family by Communist leanings; and it was not easy for a guest of her relatives to know her. But of all the others I have seen a good deal, in and out of China; and I will attempt to illustrate what their different personalities mean for the country by recalling a few incidents and impressions.

Chiang Kai-shek, with his inflexible will, military genius, and unshakable hold on the central armed forces, has for many years been the pivot of political power in China. Since the break with Borodin in 1927 and the expulsion of all Russian exponents of the Bolshevik system, his internal struggle has been in part with rival war leaders in one province or another, in part with the Chinese form of Communism. The Sun Yat-sen constitutional gospel, which his successors have invested, like the founder of the Republic himself, with a religious adoration, contemplates ultimately a free and democratic form of government. It allows, however, first for a 'period of tutelage', in which the real government is authoritarian. The country is in fact in the hands of a military autocrat, supported and to a considerable extent influenced by a party, the Kuomintang. The Generalissimo draws his strength from the twin sources of the loyalty of the Army and the support of this party. The party is less important in the combination than it is in the Russian system, and the

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elaborate formal apparatus of Government is in the last resort little more than an advisory organization or a medium through which pressure and influence can be exerted. But there are definite limits to which a military commander, even a Chiang Kai-shek, can rely upon a purely military discipline. With so little of the ordinary means of expression, Chinese public opinion nevertheless remains in some ways strangely effective. The traditional respect for learning, for example, even as represented by young students, is not lightly disregarded. On one occasion a band of students, who disliked the foreign policy of China, marched into Nanking itself. In spite of numerous armed guards, they pressed their way, without interference, into the office of the Foreign Minister and, when he failed to give them satisfaction, administered a mild beating up. I have often suggested as a test question to a foreigner who wonders how much he understands China—it is a test by which I should certainly fail myself—‘Can you understand just why this was possible, why the guards didn’t stop them, why the Chinese generally seemed to think that this was not a surprising incident?’

The Kuomintang is predominantly a party of landlord influence, and in China the land system is everything. Chinese Communism, though it has been used and to some extent directed by ideological Communists, is essentially a protest against this system; and the movement is based on peasant grievances, which are in fact in many parts intolerable. The actual relationship between landlord and agricultural worker differs greatly in different provinces, the customary provisions as to the proportion of the produce paid as rent being much more onerous in some regions than in others. When I was there I amused myself by drawing up two tables, one showing the variations in the severity of the landlords’ terms in different provinces and the other the variations in the incidence of Communism. There was an almost exact correspondence between the two tables. The Communists are over a wide region efficiently organized and militarily powerful; and the results they have been able to

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achieve in raising the general standard of living are in some respects remarkable. The struggle between them and those who derive their income from land-ownership has been the fundamental factor in China's political history since the Revolution, except when it has been temporarily submerged or disguised by the conflict of rival war lords or by the Japanese invasion. It is now again, of course, in the centre of the scene. This struggle—with the cause of national unity on one side and the indubitable need for land reform on the other—is the tragedy of China. To Chiang himself, after so many years of conflict, the crushing of Communism is apparently not only a condition of national unity, and of the support of his own position by his party, but a kind of religious crusade.

So much has been said as a background for a few personal recollections. Chiang Kai-shek has some of the qualities of a Chinese Cromwell. He is a Christian, like his wife, and perhaps largely through her influence; but he has more of the Old Testament than the New in his outlook. He attacks the Communists 'hip and thigh' with the same combination of national and religious fervour as the Jewish leaders who encountered the Philistines or Amalekites. He will open his Bible for omens—finding perhaps that, if he lights on a text about hailstones, it is a sign that he should send his aeroplanes to drop their bombs. Whether or not this particular tale is true, it well reflects the kind of limited contact he himself represents between the old and new, between East and West. Unlike the family into which he has entered by marriage, he has had no direct experience of Western civilization, either in America or in Europe. He speaks no English. He has spent his whole life in China, except for his military education in Japan, half a year in Moscow and war-time diplomatic trips to Delhi and Cairo. His experience in China has been almost exclusively military, and his outlook and manner of thought are those of a soldier. His knowledge of the West comes only through his wife, his brother-in-law and his visitors. But that

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he is a man of outstanding quality no one who has met him can doubt, nor indeed anyone who has considered his record. In a vast country of chaos and civil war, the victim, too, of foreign invasion for seven years, and even before that of constant Japanese intrigue, he has had a longer tenure of uninterrupted authority than any non-dynastic ruler except Stalin.

He is of middle height, a slim, rather stooping, monkish figure, dressed, when not in military uniform, in the long blue robe of the Chinese civilian. He greets his visitor with the Chinese inclination, hands clasped together, and indicates his appreciation of what is said with an altogether distinctive guttural note, like a courteous grunt. His interpreter is normally his wife, and the visitor, if he knows no Chinese at all, may sometimes distrust her interest in the subject under discussion and her acquaintance with it; the most reliable interpreter is one who knows the languages but cares little about the argument they are used to pursue.

One of my most treasured memories is that of a day spent in the hills and country behind Nanking in the spring of 1931—just Chiang, Madame Chiang and myself, walking as we talked and taking a picnic lunch. His dislike and distrust of the foreign Settlements, with their special courts and privileges, was not concealed; he combined a certain xenophobia with a reluctant appreciation of the riches of the West and recognition of the value of the expert advice and enterprise which many foreigners whether from Europe or Russia had brought. He was also, of course, well aware (though naturally neither he nor anyone else ever referred to it), of the occasional convenience of a guarded foreign Settlement as a possible place of refuge for a Chinese statesman in a country rent with civil war. Which of the leading personalities in China has failed to keep a house in Shanghai or Hong Kong, or at some crisis or other to find it very useful?

What Chiang wanted especially to learn from me was some method of improving China's financial resources and arresting the depreciation of the currency. With the straightforward and

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definite mind of a soldier he seemed to expect a simple specific—like a drug from a doctor—for a specific financial disease, as did another Chinese soldier-ruler, the 'Young Marshal', when I saw him later in Manchuria. It was not easy, especially through an interpreter, to expound the economics of the problem. What he understood most clearly of what I said he liked least. I told him there was only one quick and simple solution. If the budget was unbalanced, he would be forced to meet current expenses by printing notes, and that must bring inflation; and his budget could only be quickly balanced if he could make a settlement with the Communists which would save him the expense of fighting them. That of course involved questions of policy which, he quite rightly felt, were outside my province.

Of many other scenes, both on this visit and on another three years later, one remains especially vivid: a dinner with Chiang at Nanking, at which T. V. Soong, H. H. Kung, some of his other Ministers and some of my European colleagues were present. It was a time of active fighting against the Communists, and every few minutes one of his aides would come in with a despatch from the field to which the Generalissimo replied with immediate instructions.

Amid all the financial irregularities of Chinese life and customs, and whatever the precise basis of the revenues of Chiang and his Ministers, there was in himself and his régime a note of puritan austerity. He lived the life of a soldier, and endured its rigours; the troops under his direct personal command were attached to him by the discipline of a monastic rule of life; the sincerity of his—and his wife's—efforts to deal with the opium problem was unmistakable. And there was something of the same tradition in the whole history of the Republic. There might be much luxury in individual homes, but a Minister was chary about showing himself much in public in a luxurious car.

A foreign visitor could of course form no opinion about Chiang's technical skill as a soldier, except on the basis of his actual achievements and his reputation—which put him in

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a place of unchallenged eminence over any other Chinese contemporary. The outstanding personal impression—not depending upon, but of course confirmed by, his record—is that of a man of exceptional strength and tenacity of purpose, his will immovable, his courage invulnerable.

Madame Chiang—his second wife, for whom his first was dismissed—is a scarcely less remarkable personality than her husband. She was educated at Wellesley in the U.S.A., and brought back a knowledge of Western civilization, of Western ideas and of the English language which Chiang never acquired; she also returned with Christianity as her religion and to this too he was converted. An influence based doubtless originally upon her personal beauty and charm was undoubtedly reinforced by what she brought from a civilization outside his own experience. She added to her hold on him by sharing his life in all its aspects to the utmost possible extent, its rigours as well as its amenities. Her courage and endurance were as remarkable as her personal attractions. When I was in China in 1931 operations against the Communists were in active progress. Chiang Kai-shek was alternately, for considerable spells, personally directing his army in the field and then back in his house at Shanghai. When he went to the front his wife went with him and cheerfully endured the rigours of military life. I met her first when she had just returned, an astonishing apparition in the first bloom of her beauty, with the slim grace of the Chinese lady of culture, exquisitely dressed and soignée, vivacious and animated, and with no hint of her recent and prospective experience of military hardships. When I saw her a few years later, on my second visit, she was the same except perhaps for a somewhat more conscious 'grande dame' dignity. Many years later, in the second World War, she revisited America. Her eloquence, beauty and charm swept the country from the first moment. The first impression, though subsequently perhaps somewhat impaired by reports of her extravagance, by illness and the length of her stay, remains

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one of the outstanding personal achievements of the period.

Her elder sister, the wife of H. H. Kung, bears less of the impress of Western influence. She is a cultivated woman, knowing something of Europe and speaking English, but more completely Chinese in outlook and quality. Beautiful too, but in form even more than in face, with a kind of feline grace in all her movements, she is more subtle than either of her sisters, more adept in all the arts of feminine manoeuvre, in the political game. She has been perhaps the main pivot in the astonishing interplay of personal relations within the Soong dynasty, for so many years the central focus of all Chinese politics. One incident, on one of her rare visits to Europe, recounted to me by a friend who was with her at the time in Rome, reveals something of her quality. She had an appointment for an interview with Mussolini and went to keep it, equipped and prepared to exercise the charm to which so many had succumbed. She experienced the customary technique, which so many of us have known. She was first kept for a considerable time in a waiting room: and did not appreciate it. At last she was shown into a vast room, at the far end of which the great man was writing furiously with a carefully studied industry and indifference. She looked across the large intervening space, skilfully designed to break the spirit of the visitor by making him wonder, as he walked across it, whether his trousers were properly creased or, if the visitor was a woman, whatever may be the equivalent anxiety about feminine apparel. She noticed the indifference and preoccupation—and again did not appreciate it. She waited, in silent dignity, at the entrance. At last Mussolini looked up, saw the gracious figure in the distance, and made a beckoning gesture but no more. She smiled, and with Chinese grace bowed slightly with clasped hands—and stayed where she was. Mussolini returned to his writing, expecting her to be walking across the room in the meantime. After a minute he looked, saw that she had not moved, and beckoned

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more impatiently; she bowed once more, with clasped hands—and again waited. So the little drama continued, the impatience of the dictator increasing, the smiling dignity of his visitor still unruffled—till at last he rose, walked across the room and escorted her to her chair by his desk. Could the Mussolini technique be more properly countered; could anyone but a woman—and a Chinese woman—have done it? Would any Chinese woman even have been equal to it except Madame Kung?

Her husband, H. H. Kung, is a snare and an enigma to the foreign visitor, the more because he seems at first so easy to assess. He speaks English fluently, but with an accent apparently derived from the least cultivated of American circles and a tone to match the accent; the substance of his public speeches is usually moral, almost evangelical, and without apparent depth or subtlety. Private conversation confirms the impression of his public speeches; it gives no impression of insight and penetration or more than a superficial ability. But in the province of his origin he has not only great possessions but a position of hereditary dignity. With the aid of his remarkable wife, his personal fortunes witness to financial shrewdness and political acumen. For some twenty years he has maintained himself in the inner circle of central power, sharing—and alternating—with his brother-in-law in the offices of Foreign Minister, Finance Minister and President of the Central Bank—and in the favours of the Generalissimo. He probably owes his long tenure of power mainly to the ability and influence of his wife, but his own qualities must be more considerable than a foreign visitor can discern on slight acquaintance.

Most remarkable of all the Soong family is 'T. V.' Of middle height, powerful and graceful in build, with a face of great oriental beauty, an expression now of brooding meditation and now of vivid animation, he combines as few have done much of the best of the East and the West. He had banking experience in New York in his youth, and soon

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showed signs of the remarkable financial ability which has since found so wide a field. His English enables him to speak and write, not only easily and well, but with brilliance; and indeed his budget speeches in China were usually, I believe, written in English and then translated before delivery. He is temperamental and sensitive, moods of black depression alternating with gay courage; he has great personal charm and a genius in personal relations, reflected in intimate friendships not only with those of his own race but with such Westerners as Frederick Whyte, Tony Keswick and, perhaps above all, L. Rajchman. His relations with his great brother-in-law, Chiang, have been difficult and variable, changing rapidly from cordiality to mistrust, and within these limits made on the whole less rather than more stable by the curious interplay of jealousies and affections, of personal relationships and feminine influence. His own wife is beautiful, exquisite and charming, but unlike his two sisters completely non-political and without either interest or aptitude in intrigue. In wooing the fickle favours of the Generalissimo, and in his long competition for them with H. H. Kung, he had no such aid as Madame Kung gave her husband; while his younger sister usually exerted her influence in favour of whichever of the two aroused her jealousy less at the moment. 'T. V.'s' unequalled and unchallengeable standing with Western statesmen and capitalists at once helped and handicapped him. It made him indispensable; but it excited the jealousy and frequently evoked the actively hostile influence of his ambitious sisters. The family bonds which united the small governing cabal in Nanking may indeed be said to have made the relationships within it both superficially more troubled and fundamentally less dangerous. They fomented enmity—and set limits to its dangers. Success by one member would unite the others in jealous opposition. But while political dissension in China is easily carried to the point of exile or worse, the underlying family affection or sense of family unity would always intervene before that point was reached. This is the key to the curiously unstable—and yet quickly and

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constantly restored—equilibrium on which the government of China has been poised for two decades.

I recall many scenes and incidents, in Paris, London, Shanghai, Nanking and Washington, in which these qualities of T. V. Soong were displayed. When I went to Nanking with a Belgian colleague, now Governor of the National Bank of Belgium, in 1931, Chiang Kai-shek lent us a small summer house a few miles out in the country to sleep and work in. Each day T. V. Soong would come out and discuss his financial problems with us; and then in the afternoon we would ride far into the countryside (on Manchurian ponies which the unstable and dangerous 'Young Marshal' had sent as a gift of friendship to 'T. V.'—and as a peace offering to Nanking). Talk was intimate and far-ranging, now technical, now political, now general. It was a period in which it was my lot to have to discuss problems of national finance with many of the Finance Ministers of Europe, and a number elsewhere; and I never met any other with whom it was possible to get so easily to the heart of the matter as it was with him. His rapidity of apprehension, insight and technical flair were astonishing. His political flair for Chinese affairs was for a long time impaired by his long Western experience, but this handicap has been reduced in recent years by his closer association with the problems of Government in China itself. The basis of his power there has, however, continued to be his knowledge of the West and his influence upon Western statesmen and financiers. Chiang recognized that T. V. Soong was likely to get from America more than any other Chinese representative, and he could not afford to dispense with him. His political position has therefore become stronger in proportion as China has been seeking support and help. Before the war he represented Western as against Japanese influence and a less intransigent attitude than Chiang's towards the Communists. Now that Japan has been removed, the background to the Chinese political scene is of course formed by the rivalry in influence of Russia (with her rather obscure relationship with the Chinese Communists), and America.

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Even more than in the past it may be expected that T. V. Soong will be the protagonist of the West in this rivalry, and that his own personal position will become stronger if Russian influence recedes. The Western experience and qualities of 'T. V.' may easily, however, lead the foreigner to underrate what is oriental in him. He is, as any Chinese statesman must be, rooted in the Chinese system, upon which his fortunes necessarily depend; and in basic temperament and character he is Chinese. He may be destined to be the bridge between Orient and Occident; but if so his achievement will be the more solid because he is not a *déraciné*, but a Chinese statesman who has succeeded in understanding another civilization without forgetting his own. In the next few years he is likely to be the most interesting personality in China, and his political fortunes will be a barometer of the powerful rival influences on which the immediate future of the country depends.

Among the many personalities I encountered in China not the least interesting was the remarkable Australian, W. H. Donald, who died at Shanghai in 1946 after a long and romantic life of which little has yet been published. He was an adventurer in the best sense of that much-abused word, in that he lived for adventure itself and not for any material rewards it would bring. After a wandering life as a journalist he became attached to the 'Young Marshal', Chiang Hsueh-liang, lord of Manchuria. The 'Young Marshal' himself was a curiously mixed and interesting character. I saw him in Peking in 1931. Round all the approaches to his house were fierce and rugged sheep-skinned men from the wild spaces of Manchuria, waiting hours for a word and a favour. He himself when I saw him was a handsome, dark-haired, sleek figure, wearing a dinner-jacket, and with a gentle and cultured manner. He had been at Oxford and talked English easily, though his views on currency depreciation (which is what he wanted to discuss with me) were somewhat naïve. But his appearance was deceptive. Ferocity and indolence,

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civilization and barbarism, contended in him. He had been a drug addict, but was cured by the influence of Donald, who with no power or position but only his personality would literally lock him up on occasion and be thanked, not punished, for his action when the fit was past.

Donald was afterwards the friend and most trusted adviser of both General Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang. The 'Young Marshal's' relations with Nanking were fickle and unstable, and culminated in his mysterious kidnapping of the General. The kidnapping itself, the visit of Madame Chiang to the prisoner, the penitence and submission of the 'Young Marshal', are among the most moving and mysterious dramas of history; and any who can understand the emotional background, the motives and reactions of the protagonists, may justly claim (as I do not) to have penetrated the inner secrets of Chinese psychology. But whatever the key to the enigma, Donald was one of the principal factors. He accompanied Madame Chiang when she visited her husband in his prison at Sian. He used successfully the influence which he derived from his earlier association with the 'Young Marshal'.

These were only a few among the incidents of his astonishing career. He had been at the centre of every important event in China since the revolution of 1911. It is one of my regrets that I did not record at the time the vivid account he gave me, throughout one long afternoon, of his astonishing experiences over a quarter of a century. He was, in the recent war, captured by the Japanese. They regarded him (not without reason) as one of their principal enemies and they had long sought him. It is characteristic of him that he managed to live through two years of captivity without his identity being discovered, and when the war ended he was released without being recognized. The rôle he was able to play for so many years, the relationship he was able to establish first with the 'Young Marshal' and then with the Chiangs, are curiously significant of something that is often found as a bond of union and of trust in the Chinese and the Anglo-Saxon character.

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There is perhaps no part of the world in which stable and efficient government could yield such fruits as China. Here is a country of over four hundred millions. Its people are prolific, physically strong and industrious. They are apt for any kind of intricate and skilled work. They have a long history of a rich and high culture, and their traditions are such as to make them the most sincere contributors to the peace of the world and to the civilization that peace makes possible. They have a reverence for education, and those of their educated classes who have been in contact with the West understand, welcome and, while retaining much of the best of their own civilization, assimilate occidental ideas more easily and completely than any other people of the Orient. They are the predestined bridge between East and West. With all these favourable factors, the standard of living of all but the smallest fraction is, and has been through all the troubled years of civil war and invasion, intolerably and incredibly low.

Their natural qualities and resources are sufficient, with an appropriate organization and a favourable system of world trade, to lift their standards of living to those of Europe, and in doing so to create a demand which would give everywhere a stimulus to economic progress comparable with the great era of development in North America, and railway enterprise in South America, in the nineteenth century. The technical problems are soluble; but the indispensable basis, without which all financial and economic schemes are useless, is a sound, stable, comprehensive and efficient government. Since the foundation of the Republic in 1911, as in so many periods before, China has been in a state of continuous civil war or war inflicted from without.

She is now among the five permanent members of the Security Council, a position appropriate to a Great Power only. The justification for this rank is obviously a hope for the future not the reality of the present. She now has to attempt once more, under changed conditions, to achieve the political unity without which neither a position in the

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world proportionate to her potential strength nor a tolerable standard of life for the bulk of her people will be possible. Time after time in the last thirty years there has seemed some prospect of unity. It was impeded by three causes: the secret or open intervention of Japan; the lack of an honest and efficient administration; the deep rift between landlords and peasants under the form of the contest between the Kuomintang and the so-called Communists. The first impediment has been removed, but with the Japanese decline the active influence of Russia has increased; and rival foreign influence is now as serious, and as destructive, a factor in China as it has been throughout this century. The second impediment remains; it is a part of Chinese habit and tradition and it has been, if anything, accentuated by war and inflation. The third also remains. The conflict should have been mitigated by the patriotic participation of the Communist areas in the struggle against the common enemy, and by the evidence of an efficiency in their administration which compares well with that of other parts of China. But the earlier hopes of a reconciliation have faded, and the difficulties have been increased by the character of the present rivalry in foreign influence. This rivalry is now the greatest of all impediments to China's progress. If a solution is found to the world's central political problem—the relations between Russia and the Western Powers—China will at last have a better chance than at any time since the Revolution of realizing the aims of the founder of the Republic. Much may then depend upon the personal qualities of the members of the remarkable 'Soong dynasty', of whom some impressions have been recorded in this chapter. Those who control the fate of China, whether it be the Soongs or others, have the fate of a fifth of the human race in their hands.

BENITO MUSSOLINI

THE TECHNIQUE OF A PICTATOR

In the spring of 1922 a journalist called on Mr. Lloyd George at the Conference of Genoa. He was a man of early middle life, just under forty, short and robust, with a square and massive head which, with his dark and flashing eyes, gave a certain impression of power—an impression which was increased by the shape and expression of his jaw and chin, even before they had been consciously trained for the purpose. The name on his card recalled a chequered record, troublesome for a time and then more helpful; at the most a secondary and dubious figure. He was kept waiting and was then informed that Mr. Lloyd George was too busy to see him, but that one of his principal secretaries was willing to do so. The secretary too was, however, much preoccupied and the interview that followed was cursory and without interest or importance.

It is not surprising that Lloyd George should have been too busy. He was now at the climax, and crisis, of his fate. In two decades he had risen from the obscurity of a small Welsh solicitor to being, for a time, the foremost political figure in the world. He had achieved a peaceful but profound social revolution in his country. He had then mobilized its strength in war and led it to victory. In 1919 he had controlled and commanded what for the moment was the greatest military force in the world, alike on land, sea and in the air. He had been one of the three great figures at Versailles, and now in 1922 had survived his two rivals and colleagues. For Woodrow Wilson was both defeated and

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paralysed; Clemenceau had been rejected for the Presidency and had left the political field; but Lloyd George had won his Election, was still Prime Minister, and was for the time beyond question the leading figure in the world. The forces gathering against him, however, were powerful; the Conference about to open might be—as in the event it proved to be—the turning-point in his fortunes. He had no time to spare for secondary figures.

It is not easy to discover the true watershed of the inter-war period. At some point the stream changed its direction and, after many a deceptive winding and doubling back, began its sinister course towards disaster. When and where did it begin? At first it seemed to take a more promising direction. Germany was defeated and Weimar offered the prospect of a peaceful democracy. The countries in Europe with an overwhelming preponderance of power, Great Britain and France, were indubitably pacific and non-aggressive in their ambitions. America, the other great power of the first rank, if withdrawing into isolation and no longer to be counted on to help in dealing with European dangers, would at least not add to them. The new League of Nations had brought hope of enduring peace to the world and its purpose responded obviously to the wishes of the vast majority of the peoples of both hemispheres. And, in spite of serious incidents, disturbances and disillusionments, it seemed at the time that the main movement was progress to a more stable world order.

When did the current turn? It could be clearly seen to have changed at the time of Hitler's invasion of the Rhineland in March 1936. To many observers the fatal course seemed to have been taken at least as early as January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor. Others had been gravely anxious in the immediately preceding years when the world depression and financial collapse had revealed and evoked dangerous forces. Few would at the time have put a date as early as 1925, the year of Locarno and all the bright hopes it encouraged.

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But in retrospect we may perhaps ask whether the fatal turning-point was not in reality even earlier. How long, in the light of later evidence, was the Weimar Republic more than a sham or a façade behind which the real forces of the country gathered their strength? Was the French Election of 1924 which pronounced against 'Poincaré-la-guerre' possibly a disastrous decision in favour of appeasement towards a country which was already irrevocably embarked upon its fatal course? Was Stresemann, doubtless sincere in his Locarno policy in the sense that he desired peace for the time, working only for a respite in which Germany could gather strength for a very different policy? It may be that we should go even further back and find in 1922 the year of the watershed, and in the Conference of Genoa its crucial point. Certainly it was the watershed of Lloyd George's fortunes. The only survivor in office of the great war leaders, he had been working to construct the foundations of a new and united Europe, comprising Germany, comprising Russia. The Conference at Genoa, following those at other sea-side resorts, was the culminating effort. For the first time both German and Russian representatives were present. When he rose on the opening day he was beyond question the greatest political figure in the world. A few days later, however, came the meeting and agreement of the Germans and Russians at Rapallo, hastily and secretly arranged and falling on the Conference like a bombshell. A little later the Conference ended in failure; and with it, only a short time afterwards, Lloyd George fell from power. New forces were stirring in Europe; new policies forming; and so it was in his own country. He fell from the pinnacle of power to the sands of the wilderness in which he was destined to wander for the rest of his days.

How dramatic is the contrast with the fate of the younger man who had vainly tried to see him in the opening days of the Conference! Lloyd George had behind him two decades of ascent to the highest power and before him two more of partial eclipse—before entering the Valhalla in which history

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will again allot him a place among the first of the world's great men; Mussolini, after an obscure earlier life, had before him two decades of world-shaking dictatorship—before meeting an end in defeat and shame, with infamy for his portion in history.

The year of Genoa was the year of the March on Rome, of the establishment of the Fascist dictatorship, which was to prove the precedent and model for the greater Nazi dictatorship of a decade later. I saw Mussolini only infrequently in these years, for he rarely left Italy and, after the murder of Matteotti, I made a personal vow never to go there, except for a compelling official task, so long as he remained in power. But there were occasions when I had to go.

On the first of these I represented the League of Nations at an annual conference of the International Chamber of Commerce. The Italian Government gave an evening party for the Delegates, and at the appointed time I went with the others to the magnificent palace in which we were to be received. As we went up the stairs we looked with interest and curiosity at the young Italians who were on duty as a guard of honour, for the technique of strength through hysteria was still novel, and the cultivated Fascist glare of the eye and thrusting out of the chin was a strange spectacle. When we entered the vast ballroom to which we were conducted, we looked round in vain for those we expected to receive us. There was no one present except the visitors and attendants. Nor was there any form of entertainment in evidence—except a covered table at the end of the room, which seemed to promise refreshment some time later. In the meantime we were all left to find amusement for ourselves as best we could. This naturally took the form of guessing what would happen later, what members of the Government, or other Italians of distinction, we should meet. Above all, would the great man himself shed the light of his countenance on us? The rumour started that he

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would; after an hour or so it grew in strength; he would come; he would come soon; he did. Suddenly the large doors were thrown open, and the most astonishing procession burst on our gaze. In the centre was Mussolini himself, in civilian evening dress, with decorations and the wide green band of an order across his shirt. Round him, in a circle, were some eight decorated Ministers or officials. The procession moved forward and marched round the room. There was the Fascist glare in Mussolini's eyes, and his chin was thrust out. And as he walked the circling officials revolved round him, like satellites round a sun, with their backs to the company and their eyes on his, each reflecting and emulating the glare of their leader. As a last detail of the scene, almost incredible but true, Mussolini himself, as he walked, held out, in an Oscar Wilde gesture—like Bunthorne in *Patience*—a small red flower before his nose. The procession moved, slowly and silently, right round the room. The circuit completed, it was repeated. At the end of the second circuit, it stopped before the covered table. Someone called out 'Champagne!' The sheet was whipped off, a glass of champagne handed to the Duce, and then to each member of his attendant satellites. The great doors were flung open. The great man and those with him departed. When they were gone the visitors left behind were given access to the refreshments. That was all; a memory, at least, not to be forgotten.

Of the visitors, some were impressed; some were amused; some wondered what kind of government Italy was to have that was based on this sort of histrionics.

But that was only one part of the technique. Many, perhaps most, of the principal visitors received invitations to a personal interview on the days that followed. When each arrived for a tête-à-tête talk he found a very different Mussolini; a man simply dressed, sitting at his desk, and greeting the visitor with an elaborately studied informality. 'You realize I have to put on the kind of show you saw the other night for the public. But with you I'm delighted to

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have the opportunity of a man-to-man talk. Now we can talk practical business.' The compliment was the greater for the contrast; few realized how widely it was shared; and few failed to succumb to it. Many of those who had been to Rome came on afterwards to Geneva and came to see the League of Nations. It was amusing how often a conversation would end with: 'Mussolini is very different from the popular opinion of him. With all his great position and ability, he is really simple, direct and sensible. Confidentially, I can tell you that I had the privilege of a direct and intimate conversation, and this is what he said . . .' It was cruel to tell them just how many—and who—had repeated the experience.

There was another device in his technique, imitated, I believe, from Napoleon, on whom he modelled so much—his manner, pose and gestures. When a visitor who was something of an expert in a particular line of work called on him, he would be surprised to find Mussolini quoting facts and figures about his job, which seemed to reflect an intimate knowledge of it—as indeed it would have done had the necessary information not been supplied a few minutes beforehand by an official whose special job it was to supply an appropriate brief for each appointed interview on the day's list. With a competent assistant it is not really a very difficult game to play for one whose position enables him to keep complete control of the conversation and to end it when he chooses. I was myself less impressed because I had tumbled to the device and because in addition Mussolini, instead of speaking in French in which he was fluent, insisted on attempting English, in which he was only a beginner, and it was not easy to follow what he said.

Such minor devices of technique are of course no more than the tactics of a political *arriviste*. His main strategy was more subtle and more important. To understand it we must recall something of his earlier life and of the condition of the country in which he was to find his opportunity.

Like many others who have in the end become identified

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with the Right, Mussolini began as an agitator on the extreme Left. As a journalist, and in local Socialist circles, he became sufficiently inconvenient to authority to attract some attention both in his own country and outside. (It is interesting to note that in 1922, when he became *Il Duce*, his name was on the list of those debarred as a Socialist agitator from entry to Geneva.) On the outbreak of war in 1914 he broke from many of his associates and urged Italy's participation. He may have changed his convictions; he may have compromised with them. At any rate he must at this time have begun to nurse personal ambition, have become conscious of his magnetic influence over others, have begun to realize the weaknesses both of the political régime in Italy and of the Socialist opposition.

The Italian democracy, founded with the enthusiastic encouragement of liberals and idealists throughout the world in the age of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour, had proved sadly disappointing. A weak king, corrupt politicians, an aristocracy indolent in public affairs, a fatal multiplication of 'splinter-parties', had resulted in a weak and incompetent administration, incapable of domestic reform, weakly selfish, opportunist, and uncertain in foreign policy. These weaknesses were developed and made more evident during Italy's participation in the war. She had long hesitated, then entered at a moment when she wrongly judged the Allies were about to win. When victory was at last achieved it was through the successes of her Allies and after humiliating defeats of her own armies. She had been treated in effect as a secondary power at Paris and was bitterly disappointed at failing to achieve both her extravagant and her more reasonable claims at the Conference. What there was in the country of political opinion was bitter, disillusioned, febrile and feebly nationalistic; what there was of political organization was weak and incompetent. Politics in Italy had always, since her liberation from Austria, been a sickly plant without deep roots in the life of the nation. The '*risorgimento*' had been the revolution of the élite. Garibaldi and

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the 'thousand' could never have succeeded against a strong antagonist. As an able Italian woman once remarked to me, 'It was not so much that the knife was so sharp as that the cheese was so soft.' All these weaknesses remained, increased by the strains of the war; and they gave his opportunity to a man of ambition and enterprise. Fascist forces were organized, the complicity of the King (to whom personally rather than to his constitutional Government the Army gave their loyalty) was secured. The March on Rome followed (for Mussolini himself it was a comfortable and cautious journey in a train). The new authority was then established by methods, and in a form, which seemed rather to strain than subvert the normal constitution. Reforms followed, including the useful drainage of swamp land and the welcome but over-advertised improvement in the punctuality of the trains. Many honest patriots, not surprisingly blind to the future, and foreign observers, unduly influenced by the reports of delighted tourists that their trains arrived on time, welcomed the new leader. It is possible too that, intertwined with his personal ambition, there was at this time in his mind some genuine patriotic purpose and impetus.

But what seems to be the inexorable logic of autocratic power gradually transformed the character of both the régime and its controller. Opposition was dealt with, no longer by persuasion, but by physical compulsion. By insensible steps the dictator was driven to harsher methods, to reliance upon those who could be counted on to enforce them; and the poison of absolute power infected his own character, submerged what was best, and developed what was worst, in it.

The final conclusion was, however, still two decades distant. In the meantime Mussolini's policy in the situation in which he, and Italy, found themselves in the early 'twenties is an instructive example of his methods and his qualities. Italy was a country with a rapidly growing population, conscious of a greater potential strength than her place in the sun at the moment. She was young as a

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nation, and had come late into the international race. Her outlook was therefore the opposite of the 'sated' empires and countries, who are content to keep and develop what they have, and have everything to gain from an assurance of the *status quo*. Conscious at the same time of present weakness, Mussolini sought for associates, divided between desire to avoid restrictions and an equally strong desire to avoid isolation.

In such a situation, and his régime and his own character being what they were, Mussolini was at once confronted, in his external policy, with the problem of the League of Nations. It was an organization which, in spite of some provisions designed to permit change, obviously tended to the preservation of the *status quo*. It was dominated by the two most powerful European states, Great Britain and France. Mussolini, in these circumstances, became an adherent, but a reluctant adherent, to the new peace system. This is the clue to his attitude to the League of Nations itself, which he joined and then impeded from within; to the Locarno agreements, which he did his best to obstruct till it was certain they would be concluded, and then at the last moment signed; to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which he derided while its fate was in the balance and then also accepted. He did not like the club, would have preferred it not to exist, but he could not afford to be left out.

Meantime, in the League and in every international conference of the time, his technique is best described as that of 'exploiting his nuisance value'. He would consistently oppose what others wanted in order to make his presence felt and secure that he was taken more account of than Italy's representatives had been at the Peace Conference. To this policy, however, there was in Mussolini's mind, throughout the first decade of his power, a very definite limit—he would not go so far as to risk a serious breach with Great Britain. He foresaw rivalry with France, but, if he had not broken fatally with Britain, he might hope to deal with it successfully; against the more distant menace

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of Germany the British attitude might be decisive; with Britain herself conflict of interest was more remote, and in any case, he felt, he was not strong enough to provoke it. At the same time while always keeping this limit to his 'nuisance' technique in mind, he strove to enlarge it by carefully cultivating those who influenced British policy, especially the British Foreign Minister. Austen Chamberlain, rather exceptionally devoid of personal magnetism himself, was particularly susceptible to it in others; and he was greatly, and on the whole favourably, impressed by the personality of Mussolini. By skilfully playing upon Chamberlain's personal characteristics Mussolini was often able to secure much more than he would have been ready if necessary to accept.

Meantime his authority in Italy was being consolidated; his well-advertised reforms increased his external prestige; he counted for more in international conferences. His success was notable, but he was impatient for more rapid progress. There was in his mind, as in the mood of his country, that most dangerous psychological state which develops so often at a time of transition from inferior to equal or superior strength. Italy, like Germany, had passed through a period in which she was treated as an inferior by those by whom she felt she should be treated as an equal, and in which, while bitterly resenting this treatment, she had to endure it because of her weakness. Then, under the impulse of this resentment, in combination with other causes, she had begun to acquire a power which began to be feared. The psychological state which attends this process is inaccurately described as either an inferiority or a superiority complex. It is much more dangerous than either. It combines the worst of each. It is different from that of a country which is conscious both of unequal treatment and of comparative weakness. It is equally different from the complacent sense of superiority which, for example, made Britain disliked but tolerated in the days of her unchallengeable naval supremacy. The psychology of the transition state, as power is regained

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and while the memories of humiliation are still vivid, combines the resentment of weakness with the arrogance of strength.

The personal temperament of Mussolini, and the character of his régime, both reflected and increased the dangers of this psychology. And when the second and greater Fascist régime was established in Germany, the similarity of the two régimes, and what was common to the two countries and the two dictators in temperament, outlook and previous experience, began to alienate Mussolini from the West. But the greater strength, for the time, of the Western Powers—and the greater menace of Germany to Italy if she should gain equal or superior strength—delayed the movement for some years.

The decision to embark on the Abyssinian adventure, the omission at the Conference of Stresa of any attempt to stop it, and the sanctions fiasco, marked the final alienation from the West. Mussolini passed his intended limit—unintentionally. Some of us were at the time pursuing a Press campaign in England to urge that if we were not ready to go through to the end, we had better have stayed out from the beginning; a policy of pinpricks and bluff would be fatal; and that once started we must go on. Mussolini was sufficiently disturbed to send his ablest negotiator for the purpose, Alberto Pirelli, to London. He asked Walter Layton, Josiah Stamp and myself to a small dinner and did his utmost to persuade us to stop the campaign. We were not convinced and another letter on the same issue which I had already written duly appeared in *The Times* of the next morning. But one thing he said did seriously disturb me. He said, 'We can't now go back. Everyone knows that we've already sent an expedition. We thought we had your tacit acquiescence. We went to the Conference of Stresa (which had been held a few weeks before) expecting to learn England's real attitude. We had assured ourselves already of Laval's acquiescence. We knew that you knew that our military stores were already going through the Suez Canal. We knew that you wanted us to

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be on your side in an issue with Hitler, and we thought it likely that you were prepared to acquiesce in our Abyssinia venture as the price. When your Ministers said nothing, we thought we could rely at least on being safe from active intervention.' I was sufficiently disturbed to go privately to Ramsay MacDonald's house and ask him directly whether it was in fact true that he had said nothing about Abyssinia. He replied that, on the contrary, the Foreign Office experts had been taken out especially and had made contact with their opposite numbers. I said that what Pirelli had alleged was that no British *Minister* had said anything—on a question of obviously outstanding importance. He replied, 'I was myself completely preoccupied with the main problem, that of Germany. Simon (Foreign Secretary at the time) was also at the Conference. I do not know if he raised the question of Abyssinia.' I was answered.

Nevertheless, negligent as Great Britain may have been at this point, it seemed obviously essential, once we had taken our line at Geneva, to pursue it to a successful conclusion. The campaign in the Press was continued. Mussolini at one stage did Gilbert Murray and myself the honour of denouncing us personally as bloodthirsty Oxford professors, adding that the time would come when we should suffer for it. When news of this came to me I was myself on a ship in the Mediterranean which was due to stop a day later at Palermo. I confess I showed my passport to the Italian officials at the port, before disembarking for a day's excursion, with some apprehension. But nothing happened.

The personal relations between 'the dictator who was declining in relative power and the younger, more violent dictator in the north were not cordial; and Mussolini had no wish for a fatal embrace by the stronger. But as he broke with the West fate drove him inexorably; the Spanish Civil War, the Brenner, the invasion of Austria, were steps to an inevitable conclusion; at the end came the 'stab in the back' of 1940. Italy had joined the first war on our side when she

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thought that victory would be quick and cheap. It was neither. But Mussolini now made a more fatal miscalculation, followed by three years of varied fortunes, an ignominious refuge with his more powerful ally, and then a shameful death.

Mussolini, of course, was much more than the mountebank he seemed at the Rome reception in 1923. He was more than a pioneer of the technique that appeals to a neurotic national psychology. He was not a mere crooner of hatred as Hitler seemed in his earlier years. His earlier speeches expressed political ideas which were intelligible, and indeed in some cases attractive, even to 'unconditioned' minds. There is something in his 'corporative' ideas which may find an enduring place, within the framework of true Parliamentary democracy, in the form of functional representation. And in his first period he has to his credit some genuine and important internal reforms and development. He was like the Napoleon on whom he tried to model himself, in being a much better man before irresponsible power corrupted him. It was only gradually that he became the victim of his own bombast, the dupe of his own dope. But the fatal process continued, destroying first his character and then his mind and body. Personal excesses, and frantic attempts to disguise the failure, with years, of his physical strength, led at last to the mental, moral and physical disintegration which are so vividly reflected in Ciano's diary. History records no more tragic example of the inexorable logic of absolute personal power.

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Personal characteristics have a twofold historical significance. They help to explain both why those holding political power exercised it on great occasions as in fact they did, and also how they came to acquire that power. The reader who, in studying a particular historic decision, has a clear picture in his mind of the personality of the protagonists, will better understand the decision itself and the sequence of following events. The relation, however, between personality and the acquisition of political power is rather more complex.

A distinction is often foolishly made, or foolishly used, in discussing political affairs, between power and purpose. It will, for example, be said rather loosely that the issue in a given case is whether might or right will prevail. If that indeed were the question the answer would be only too clear. If all the might is on one side, and the right has no strength to support it, if all the force is at the command of those whose purpose is evil, and idealism is physically impotent, the first is bound to prevail. Power and purpose are the body and soul of politics; and the second alone without the first can no more control mundane affairs than the disembodied spirit of a saint whose body is too frail to live and whose influence is unfelt by those who survive. The acid test of a better purpose or ideal is that it shall prove to have an attractive power for those who, in the last resort, are willing to use their strength in its service; at the cost, if necessary, of the sacrifice of their property or persons, and with an ardour equal to that of those who support a contrary purpose.

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To say this, of course, is not to say that brute force is everything, and the human will nothing. For all force is only capable of use by the will of men; and no man can exercise power unless he can induce others to support him in his purposes. The inducements employed, however, may vary in kind, at the one extreme from the reasonable persuasion of free, and unorganized, men each of whom is able to take an unfettered individual decision in the light of reason, to the threat of death or torture at the other. Within these two extremes the inducements available to a particular man ambitious of power vary indefinitely with the character of the political and social organization of the community in and through which he has to operate. In a country like our own which has a constitutional system, with Parliamentary sovereignty, which can rely upon the obedience of the armed forces, the route to supreme power is through the electorate, Parliament and the Cabinet; and the personal qualities which will give success are those which enable the aspirant to persuade a party committee and the electors; and then to impress himself in turn upon Parliament and his colleagues in his party and in office. On the other hand, in a country in which, at a given moment, a vast machine of organized power, effectively maintained by both propaganda and terrorism, is at the service of a central authoritarian committee of a dozen or so men, the immediate condition of supreme power may depend upon skill in intrigue within that small committee.

No political experience of the last few decades is more worth intensive study than the way in which a man, or a small group of men, starting from nothing, acquire the power to transform, as Hitler and Mussolini did, a comparatively free Parliamentary system into one of dictatorship, or, as Lenin did, to supplant (after a brief interlude of transitional liberalism), one authoritarian system by another. Obviously much depends upon the pathological condition of the society in which the revolutionary works and the decadence of its political system. In Germany there was the neurosis of earlier defeat and the chaos of economic collapse; in Italy political

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corruption and the impotence of Parliamentary government, increased by the strains and disappointments of war; in Russia the abuses of the Czarist régime and not less the disintegration of an army in defeat.

Not less important is the actual technique of the acquisition of power from conditions of chaos, for the understanding of which a minute, and even microscopic, study of the earlier steps taken by Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler is required. Among the best material now available is the description by Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, of what may be called the method of proliferating cells. More, however, can now be gleaned from the experience in Italy and in Germany, as well as in Russia. Obviously, when all is known, there will be important differences reflecting the differences in the respective countries at the time; but much will be found that is common to all these revolutions.

Equally important is the actual personality of the men who successfully acquired the power which enabled them to establish a dictatorship and themselves as dictators. The search for the inner secret of strength is much more difficult than when we are studying the alternations of power in a free or stable régime. No one of judgment and experience could at any time have been brought into intimate association with a Gladstone, a Lloyd George, a Roosevelt, a Churchill, or a Clemenceau, without discerning their qualities of greatness and of leadership. But most, if not all, of those who knew Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler in the days before they had acquired power, failed completely to discern the qualities in them which enabled them later to shake the world.

Lenin was a man of insignificant appearance and no obviously outstanding ability, with a parentage in the minor nobility and the family traditions of a bureaucrat. To most who saw him at Geneva, for example, he seemed a quite ordinary man. The courage and inflexible will, and even the skill in the specific arts of a revolutionary, could only be seen as they found their expression later in successful action. It

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is a remarkable example of discernment that the German High Command realized that, by sending him across Europe in a sealed train in 1917, they were sending a kind of political atom bomb into Russia.

Mussolini indeed, even at first sight, displayed some qualities that marked him out from other men, including a certain personal magnetism, but no one could have foreseen a great future for him, even as late as a year before the March on Rome, as the incident which I have described at the Conference of Genoa serves to indicate.

Hitler, after more than a decade of futile revolutionary agitation, seemed, till the very eve of his acquisition of supreme power, to all the world, including those with most political experience in Germany, to be almost a negligible, or at least only a secondary, figure. Illiterate, without any but quite subordinate experience in either peace or war, incapable of any appeal to men in a rational frame of mind, he seemed at most a serviceable minor instrument for stronger hands. It is clear indeed from his subsequent rule that he had abilities which would have qualified him for work of importance in office under a Parliamentary régime, which could have offered him scope for such talents as he had, restrained what was eccentric and extreme in him, and removed him from office when he approached insanity—if indeed he would have ceased to be sane without the corruption of absolute power. But then, under a Parliamentary régime in a country with a normal psychology, he would never in all probability have secured power, and without it such abilities as he possessed would not have been known. What in fact distinguished him from other men (except the courage and obsession by a purpose which characterize all successful revolutionaries), was his ability to recognize the German neurosis of the time, and to find the slogans, the catchwords, the methods of parade and propaganda to which the abnormal psychology of the public at the time would respond. He discovered the 'Open Sesame' to release the passions of the underworld of the subconscious which in sane men are

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kept under reasonable control, and the result of the discovery, or perfection, of this sinister political instrument was comparable in its political consequences with the discovery of atomic energy in the sphere of physics. It is to this, his own personality, and to the combination of the technique of the proliferating cell at the centre, with the mass appeal at the circumference to the general public, that his rise to power was due. The world, in spite of Russia and Italy, had then no fully comparable experience to help it to discern beforehand what was happening. It now has much to study in the combined and successive experiences of the three countries.

The character of autocratic government and the conditions required for any attempt either to establish or overthrow it have been completely transformed by the weapons which scientific invention has now placed in the hands of those who have once acquired the power to rule, to arm themselves and to disarm others. In an age of pikes and primitive weapons no force at the disposal of an autocratic governor could cow or suppress an overwhelming majority of determined and discontented subjects. For though discipline and organized skill could do much, it could be largely offset by the rage of desperation in brave rebels; and one man with a pike was within measurable distance of being the equal of another. Every tyranny, therefore, however unrestricted in its form, required, in order to endure, to be popular in the sense of not arousing furious and widespread discontent.

In time not only weapons but the whole mechanism of government (transport, intelligence, etc.) improved, and at the same time the opportunities of oppression increased. Nevertheless such an alien tyranny as that of Turkey over the subject Christian races of South Eastern Europe, corrupt, languid and spasmodically brutal, was made substantially less intolerable for centuries by incompetence. In the age of Louis XVI, and indeed even of Napoleon after him, barricade revolutions were still possible—and their possibility was a restraining influence on the exercise of autocratic power. The end of the barricade was in sight, though not everywhere

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attained, when Haussman to the order of Napoleon III planned the radiating avenues from the Arc de Triomphe to give an unimpeded field of fire. With modern weapons, the tank and the bombing aeroplane, and with the modern technique of Gestapo organization, the development is complete. No government once established, which remains united, is powerful enough to establish a monopoly of arms, skilful enough to retain the loyalty of its servants who employ them, and ruthless enough to use them without mercy, can be overthrown. Ninety per cent of the population may desire the overthrow of the régime, but they can be cowed and controlled by the armed minority.

It may indeed be said that the most recent discoveries of science, especially of the way to release atomic energy, have changed this position. Even the most competent dictatorship may not be immune to the danger of the 'bomb in the suitcase'. There may be some truth in this, but an atomic bomb is much more likely to be the weapon of a rival dictatorship group than of a people intent upon freedom. The surest physical basis of democracy would be the comparative equality of strength between any groups of citizens of equal numbers. In that case it would be evident that an electoral vote would be likely to give the same result as a civil war, so that ambition would be attracted into political channels. We are as far as possible from that position, and whatever 'atom' weapons, if they are used, may achieve, they are exceedingly unlikely to be the instrument of a restoration of freedom. All political action to establish or regain a free government must be undertaken with a consciousness that modern weapons constitute an additional handicap, which necessitates additional effort, and the discovery of alternative sources of strength and influence.

How then may an authoritarian régime, once established, be replaced by one of free self-government?

We need only here mention, to dismiss, the quite special case of a non-self-governing country ruled by another which

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is itself democratic and self-governing. Here the development of opinions and ideas in the 'imperial' democracy will itself be a principal, indeed the decisive, factor. The most important instance at present is of course that of India, but a similar situation arises, and will arise, both elsewhere in the British Commonwealth and in other 'imperialist' or colonial systems. It has of course long been the basic principle of British policy to allow and encourage self-government. The process which has reached its culmination in the Dominions, and is in its penultimate stage in India, is in operation at varying stages throughout the Commonwealth. The questions that arise are about the capacity of a given unit for self-government at a particular time, the conditions and pace of transfer and so on. Military power is not the decisive factor because it cannot, and will not, be used to obstruct the desire of a hitherto unfree community which is recognized to be ripe and avid for self-government. There is no analogy, therefore, with a dictatorship régime's rule either over its own or subject peoples.

A dictatorship is both impervious to persuasion and ruthless in the use of its military strength. What then is possible?

It is of course conceivable that a palace revolution, a contest for the succession between members of a governing junta, or the closest associates of the dictator, may open the way to the resurgence of a popular movement. All members of a dictatorship clique are, however, likely to be acutely conscious that 'if they do not hang together they will hang separately' and to find in this common interest a cement of unity.

Revolution, in these circumstances, can rarely be successful unless it penetrates the armed forces themselves; and that will not often happen if the central authority is competent, skilful and itself united, except after defeat in an external war.

Freedom, once lost, is thus perhaps less likely to be regained by civil war than by the liberating forces of a victorious enemy; and even then it may be precarious.

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The strength which is at the disposal of a dictatorship, in modern arms and methods of organization, is therefore so great that the prospects of peoples who have lost freedom are indeed bleak. The greater should be the incentive to those who are still free to preserve their freedom, to be on their guard against any tendency which may endanger it.

Unhappily the subversion of a free government can be more easily achieved. The soil may be prepared for a Fascist revolution, without deliberate intent and by gradual and scarcely visible internal weaknesses in the body politic; and civic courage and spirit may be latent till too late.

To say this, and no more, might suggest that the future of the world is with the dictatorships. This would, however, be gravely misleading. In the long run free systems have great, and probably overwhelming, advantages. It is in their early years that dictatorships develop their greatest strength. A group of men, of exceptional ability, vigour and ruthlessness, led perhaps by a fanatic of genius, may seize the supreme power. They are able to harness to their purpose the qualities bred in freedom and the industrial organization that has been built under the spur of competition. They can then enforce a single and consistent policy throughout every subordinate agency with a speed and efficiency which is impossible to a 'government by persuasion'. They can therefore quickly mobilize the whole strength of the country for a single purpose; and, if their purpose is, as it may well be, a war of aggression, the danger to the more slowly moving free democracies who are menaced may be grave indeed. If, however, the aggressors, in this first period of their greatest relative strength, fail to obtain a decisive result, the balance then turns. Autocracy has its own inner weakness, less visible at first but in the end more fatal. Initiative, inventiveness and the enduring ardour of those who know for what they work and approve it, grow in the soil of freedom and not of tyranny. Autocracy has no such inherent cleansing process for corruption and inefficiency as public criticism and open competition afford in a free system; and in time these vices, if

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unchecked, will drain the strength of any country. While democracy exposes its sores, autocracy whitens its sepulchres. If in time there is folly at the top (and uncritical adulation makes this increasingly likely), it will be transmitted throughout the system, without limit or corrective, as quickly as the efficient direction of the early period. When disastrous consequences become apparent the first result will be a more ruthless tyranny, expressed in successive 'purges'. These in turn, however, are likely to aggravate the evil they are designed to end or conceal. For in a general climate of fear and suspicion everyone able to do so will try to gather personal power as a protection against rivals or jealous superiors. A kind of furtive feudalism will thus develop, concealing itself so long as the supreme authority seems too strong to challenge, but preparing the way for disintegration when the opportunity occurs, as it may well do when the question of succession arises on the death (or overthrow in a palace revolution), of the man or men who have hitherto held the supreme office.

Now that so many of the secrets of the Hitler régime have been revealed we can see how this inner canker of autocracy had long been developing. It was retarded and for long disguised from us, and from most of those in his own country, by the mesmeric personality of Hitler himself and by the secrecy of war. But in retrospect it seems probable that the potential strength of Great Britain was more efficiently mobilized for war by 1941, and that of America, by 1943, than that of Germany. And, if war had never come, it is probable that by this time the Nazi régime would have shown itself visibly inferior, in its economic achievements, to the free democracies. Those therefore who in countries still free are girding themselves to defend their freedom, may do so with faith in the ultimate future.

In the long run therefore—if there is a long run—the prospects for freedom are good. It remains none the less true, however, that freedom has been recently lost by several countries which once enjoyed it and is nowhere secure against

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assault. And, whatever may be the ultimate fate of the world, freedom once lost, its recovery is, for the reasons given above, both difficult and doubtful. It is easier to retain than regain. More than ever is 'eternal vigilance' the price of liberty'; and it is a central need of our time to find a prophylactic against the inner rot of democracies which gives the native dictator or the external foe his temptation and his chance.

Something at least of value can be learned from an intensive study of the pathology, and the dominant personalities, of countries in which dictatorship has replaced free government. The conclusions to be drawn are better understood if these are compared and contrasted with the experience of the more fortunate democracies, whose characteristic weaknesses and latent strength need no less careful study.

The sketches in this book include little about the dictatorships. But they may serve to illustrate the personal qualities which at different periods attract power and influence policy in a free but changing system like our own.

The qualities which attract power have changed with astonishing rapidity in the first half of this century. In its first years the approaches were still held by those to whom the qualities of an aristocracy—of a Balfour or a Grey—had a strong appeal. Soon, however, a wider electorate began to be conscious of its strength and demanded new qualities in its leaders. It was neither as a member of a privileged class, nor as the nominee of a party machine, but as a tribune of the people, with his dynamic imagination and direct popular appeal, that Lloyd George rose to supreme power before, during, and for a few years after the first world war. Then for a confused twenty years there was a reaction in the mood of the nation, and as America had replaced Woodrow Wilson by Harding and Coolidge, we turned to Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, with no more than brief periods of the ambiguous MacDonald to reflect the more enduring movement to the left.

The second world war submerged the normal domestic

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conflict and the country instinctively turned to a personality in which the national Everyman could find an incarnation of everything that he then wished to be. When hostilities ended, the forces that had been gathering strength before the war resumed their progress. It was no accident that the new Prime Minister was essentially a representative of a great political party, the new party of the Left, and that the qualities which gave him this position were those which gain promotion in a party organization. It is to the credit of the organization that what brought him to leadership (with the help perhaps at a crucial moment of some good fortune) was an immaculate record of long and devoted service to the Party and to the less privileged classes to which it makes its appeal; a character exceptionally exempt from vanity and egoism; common sense, orderly industry, and the qualities that made a good mediator between more vivid and personally ambitious colleagues; an intellectual and educational equipment equal to that which secures entry into the higher ranks of the Civil Service. These rather than a talent for Parliamentary or platform oratory were in this case the instruments of success. It would be unwise to generalize from a single instance. But at least it is clear that, by comparison with the nineteenth century, both the House of Commons and the general electorate have been losing ground to the party organizations as the effective selector of the occupant of the highest office; and more than in the past the qualities which bring to the top are those which prove to appeal most to those who have most influence inside the party machine.

The public men whose portraits have here been sketched were both the product and the reflection of their environment; but they have also left the impress of their personalities on the history of their time. Individual genius or talent distinguished each from his fellows, but it was the more potent in giving him mastery over the fate of others because it was in correspondence with the mood and temper of the moment. Contemporary history has been fashioned

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by the interplay of such personalities with the events of their time; and neither of these two factors must be ignored or underrated if we are to understand the causal sequence of human fortunes.

The 'floruit' of all who are here depicted falls within the same half century. But even within this short space of time political and social changes have been profound, and in correspondence with them there has been some change in the human qualities which give an advantage in the contest for power. Some qualities, however—courage, personal magnetism, strength of will and purpose—are common to nearly all those who in any age or country leave a deep imprint on history. A strong and magnetic personality may for a long time deflect, even though it does not permanently reverse, the march of events. A few glimpses of the kaleidoscopic process by which the pattern of human affairs shifts and re-forms may perhaps be afforded by this collection of portraits of some of 'the choice and master spirits of this age'.

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